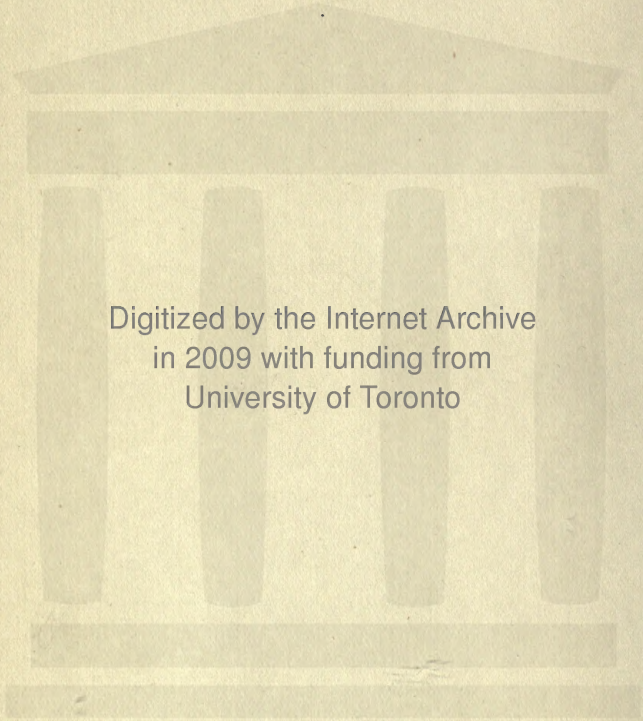

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LETTERS OF

HORACE WALPOLE

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
LONDON, EDINBURGH
NEW YORK AND TORONTO



Emery Walker Ph. Sc.

Mrs Fitzherbert

From a painting by Thomas Gainsborough.

WC185R1

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

AND EDITED WITH NOTES AND INDICES

BY

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

WITH PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES

VOL. XIII: 1783—1787

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† Now printed for the first time.

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† Now printed for the first time.

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ERRATUM

Page 64, l. 10 from top; *for* Christian *read* Austrian.

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

2414. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1783.

Though your letter is dated on the 19th, I did not receive it till yesterday. Mr. Alderson left it at my door just as I was getting into my chaise to come hither, and did not send up word he was there, or I should certainly have desired to see him. However, I wrote a line immediately to General Conway, desiring he would look over his memoranda for a recommendation of Lady Holdernesse (for you did not even tell me the young gentleman's name), and send me word whether anything was likely to be done for him soon. I expect to hear to-morrow before this goes away.

I tell you honestly that this was all I could do. When Mr. Conway was made Commander-in-Chief, I earnestly recommended to him to be strict in doing justice, as I think nothing so cruel as to have boys by favour put over old officers; and not above two months ago encouraged him to resist such a partiality for one of his own nephews, telling him that such a refusal would serve him to plead to others. As I knew too that from my friendship with him I should frequently be solicited to apply to him, I desired that whenever I should, he would not comply with my request if it was not a perfectly just and reasonable one, and I promised that I would approve instead of taking his

refusal ill. I went farther; for one of my own nephews asked me to get him made one of Mr. Conway's aide de camps: I positively refused. I said Mr. Conway had been forty years in the army, had commanded different regiments, and must know meritorious officers whom he ought to prefer, and whom it would hurt if he took my recommendation; or that he would be hurt himself if he did not oblige me. I am sure you will approve my conduct, and therefore I do not apologize for doing no more than asking your question, except saying that the young man was desirous of real service. Indeed at present, when so many regiments are to be broken, I conclude Mr. Conway must be overwhelmed with solicitations, even for the real service, as many officers will be, must be content to be saved without greater indulgence.

I am shocked at what you tell me of the *son-in-law*[1], and pity the Countess much, yet I am not surprised: there is no discouragement to infamous proceedings. Mr. Falkener[2] has just abandoned a daughter of Lord Ashburnham[3], with worse circumstances if possible than Lord Egremont did my niece. You will not wonder when you reflect who was his patron.

You say I am very severe: why I am very angry. What the deuce is the fullness or emptiness of the town to you! Am I never to see you but after a plague? Will you never come to London but when you have not an acquaintance in it? Beauties or ministers may affect to dread being crowded to death, but nobody haunts us who have no power, no

LETTER 2414.—[1] The Marquis of Carmarthen (divorced from Lady Holderness's daughter in 1779), who 'by taking advantage of a lawyer's blunder in Lord Holderness's will is likely to distress her exceedingly, and I shall not wonder if the house, pictures, &c., in Hertford Street, follows Sion Hill.' (Mason to Walpole, May 19, 1783.)

[2] William Augustus Fawkener.

[3] Lady Jemima Elizabeth Ashburnham, second daughter of second Earl of Ashburnham; m. (1785) James Graham, Marquis of Graham, afterwards third Duke of Montrose; d. 1786.

credit. I care for as few as you, and yet I can go tamely about and nobody molests me; if you will not come till you can give the law, why I shall be in my grave. You had better laugh as I do, at my own departed visions. I will not give up my friends and the world (as far as I choose to have anything to do with it) because it does not please to be amended accordingly to the plan I had drawn for it. Well, but you say you will come; so I will scold no more, though I cannot bear your flinging away your talents on a province or country town; you was born to fill the mouth of fame and not to be proclaimed by a penny trumpet at a village fair.

Most of the French invasion are returned. I have not seen one of them, cock or hen. I was so scandalously treated about my dear old friend's[4] papers, that, except her memory and Tonton, I will never have anything to do more with or love anything that comes from France. I like Mr. Meynell's expression; he is so tired of these visitors that he says *he wishes we were safe at war again.*

Your story on Brown's death[5] is worth a million, yet I can match it from the same *mouth*, though I cannot write it without committing some names that I must not mention. If I ever do see you, you shall hear it, that is, if I don't forget it; but we meet so seldom, that half the anecdotes I had for you will be mouldy. There is no sense in living but in a great capital; one can choose one's way of life, and what sort of company one pleases. There is more variety of sense, and fewer prejudices: I am sure from my own practice one can live as retiredly as one chooses, and do more what one will than in any other place, without any

[4] Madame du Deffand.

[5] 'Soon after the news . . . had reached the Royal ear he [the King] went over to Richmond gardens, and in a tone of great satisfaction said to the under-gardener: "Brown is dead: now Mellicant, you and I can do here what we please."' (Mason to Walpole, May 19, 1783.)

ennui. Pray what is one to do in the country, if so unfortunate as to grow tired of one's first favourite, oneself? What! have recourse to one's neighbours? oh! they are charming company! They tell you some antiquated lie out of the newspapers, that in London did not gain credit in the steward's parlour even on its birthday. No, I have no patience with your living amongst country squires, instead of living amongst men.

Sunday, June 1.

I have got a note from Mr. Conway. He says he finds on his list a Mr. Alderson recommended by Lady Holdernesse; but that she applied before the conclusion of the war, when he thought it would rain ensigncies; that he is now left with above an hundred engagements, and that the new plan of *seconding two companies* (I don't understand military Hebrew) *with their officers on all the corps* will increase his difficulty of performing them. This does not look as if your friend would be served soon. However, as he bids me tell him if Mr. Alderson is the person, as I shall tell him it is within a letter, I do not despair. I write a line to Mr. Alderson to desire he will call on me in town on Friday; and this I send to London, by a gentleman who dines with me, to Lord Harcourt, who will deliver it to you on the Birthday,

When you are singing the day and singing the song,
And singing the day all night long.

P.S. I have writ to Mr. Conway again. The Prince of Wales and the Duc de Chartres sup with him to-night. I excused myself, and as it is a glorious day I have told him how glad I am to be here rather than in Warwick Street! and that as much sun as would gild a daisy, is preferable in my eyes to all the Dan-de-Lions and Cœur-de-Lions that ever supped since Charlemagne.

2415. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, June 9, 1783.

I have seen Mr. Alderson, and told him what General Conway says, to whom I have spoken again, and who will serve his friend when he can, though it will not be soon, from the circumstances I mentioned, and of which Mr. Alderson allows the force.

There are two new pieces published about Gray's poems; one is called *Criticisms on the Elegy*, and pretends to be written by Johnson. I was told it would divert me, that it seems to criticize Gray, but really laughs at Johnson. I sent for it and skimmed it over, but am not at all clear what it means—no recommendation of anything. I rather think the author[1] wishes to be taken by Gray's admirers for a ridiculer of Johnson, and by the latter's for a censurer of Gray.

The other piece is a professed defence of Gray against Johnson, by Potter, the translator of Æschylus. It is sensibly written, is civil to Johnson and yet severe; but, though this is the declared intention, I have heard that the true object was to revenge the attack on Lord Lyttelton at the instigation of Mrs. Montagu, who has her full share of incense, and who, with insipid Bishop Hurd, is pronounced the two best critics of this or any age! Were I Johnson, I had rather be criticized than flattered so fulsomely. There is nothing more foolish than the hyperboles of contemporaries on one another, who, like the nominal Dukes of Aquitaine and Normandy at a coronation, have place given to them above all peers, and the next day shrink to simple knights.

I have been reading some more of those pinchbeck encomiums in Beattie's new volume. He talks of the *great*

Letter 2415.—[1] John Young (d. 1820), Professor of Greek at Glasgow.

Lord Lyttelton, and of the sublime and *apostolic* simplicity of my Lords Hurd and Porteus. Should not you like to hear St. Peter toast Madame Hagerdorne with the former, and St. Paul in a Fast sermon out-flattering Bishop Butler with the latter? I have waded through many a silly book in my day, as my eyes know to their sorrow, but, poor souls, they never had a more cruel penance imposed on them than this quarto of Beattie, though they did read the whole reign of Henry II[2], all Cumberland's works in metre and out of metre, all the *Archæologias*, and many other reverend bodies of antiquity and heraldry. Beattie's, indeed, is the reverse of those *anile tomes*, for it is *in usum* of the cradle and nursery. I have got through one hundred and nine pages, but, dearly as I love quartos, I doubt I shall never compass the other five hundred and fifty pages, though in equity I would fain try whether I cannot find one page that is not the poorest commonplace that was ever repenned. He calls his work *Dissertations, Moral and Critical.* I have corrected the last word in my copy into *Tritical.*

You will find more merit in Mr. Crabbe's poem of *The Village*, at least in the first canto. The second is a tribute, and much too long, to the Duke of Rutland's passionate fondness for his brother[3], and nothing to the purpose of the first part. The brave young man deserved an immortal epitaph; but this is a funeral sermon. However, Mr. Crabbe is a more agreeable poet than your heroic friend Mr. Hayley, and writes lines that one can remember.

My *treillage* of roses begs its duty to the flower-garden at Nuneham, and my towers long to be gossips at the christening of the tower that is to be there. My printing-house has its longings too, and if you have a mind to make it completely happy, you will contribute something to the nosegay,

[2] By Lord Lyttelton. [3] Lord Robert Manners.

of which I have yet got nothing but Mr. Whitehead's charming sprig. Remember, I have never printed anything of yours yet, and my press cannot die in peace till it does.

2416. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 11, 1783.

You never gave me a commission[1] before, my dear Sir, that I was unwilling even to try to execute; but you will see in a moment that I am the most improper person in the world to attempt what is required. I say nothing of my gratitude to you for all the trouble you have taken for me on a thousand occasions, which ought to make me decline no task to oblige you. In the present case, I should have a stronger incitement—zeal for the cause of inoculation, which I hope will not suffer by the absurdity of a Leyden *Gazette*, though falling in with the prejudices of Italy and Germany, absurdity catches and spreads like the rapid mischief of fire. In general, I can assure you that the death of Prince Octavius has neither been imputed to inoculation, nor checked the practice. He was recovered of the small-pox, and died of a sudden illness; and the two other children are quite recovered, though they had been unhealthy before; and some of them were bathed in the sea for two years together, along with Prince Alfred, who died last year, and was *not* inoculated.

Letter 2416.—[1] The Great Duke of Tuscany was going to inoculate his children, when he saw in a Leyden *Gazette* that Prince Octavius had been killed by inoculation, and immediately desired Sir Horace Mann to inquire of Mr. Walpole (with whom he knew Sir Horace corresponded) whether it was true. Mr. Walpole knew, on his side, that the Great Duke opened letters, and therefore did not choose to speak out, as the Prince died of an hereditary humour which the Princess Dowager of Wales had brought into the family, and of which she herself and some of her children and grandchildren died. Yet as Mr. Walpole was afraid of hurting inoculation, he said enough to let the Great Duke guess at the truth, though without committing the writer. *Walpole.*

This is all the satisfaction I can give you. To make inquiry of the King's physicians would in *me* be highly blameable. Consider, in the first place, how I am connected[2]; and, in the next, should the physicians tell me, which it is not probable they would (and if they did not, what could I say?), that the child died of an hereditary complaint, would it be decent for me to repeat it? would it not be trumpeted about till it would reach both London and Anspach? and, the more credit given to my report, the more I should be quoted. I choose, therefore, to remain in perfect ignorance of what the child died, only convinced that it was not killed by inoculation. You may tell the Great Duke what is most true, that I am in the country, and not *à portée* to see the royal physicians: persuade him to wait, and he will hear that inoculation has not lost a grain of character; and do not let him deprive his children of such a blessing, because the Leyden *Gazette* is a fool and liar. Were the fact truth, is *one* child lost an argument against millions preserved? if the child was unhealthy before, would it be a reason for not inoculating children that are well?

I am very sorry that your nephew has any embarrassment in his family. Parents are much to be pitied! how difficult for fondness and prudence to be both satisfied, and to conduct their charges safely into port! At present, the encumbrance seems double. Sons can scarce avoid the contagion of gaming; daughters make unworthy choices—for how can they make good! If they marry titles and wealth, may they not be sent back to their parents in two or three years to be maintained—or even before they are married? Such rascals are some of our young

[2] Mr. Walpole being uncle of the Duchess of Gloucester, who was then at Anspach with the Duke, he saw how improper it was for him to talk of the King's children as diseased, or to have it reported at Anspach that he had talked of that disorder. *Walpole.*

fellows! Just such an instance has happened in Lord A.'s[3] family.

As to Cav. Mozzi, I have told you lately that I think his business will be concluded ere long—not so advantageously for him perhaps as I hoped before the discussion, Mr. Duane allowing some of Lucas's demands to be just. We now wait for solution of some queries we have sent to Devonshire.

P.S. Since I wrote my letter, I have seen a person who tells me the young Prince was at the sixth day of the smallpox in the most favourable manner, was seized with convulsions, and died—it is supposed, from a pock on the brain; which has sometimes happened, and may just as well happen in the natural way. This is a *hors d'œuvre*, nor do I know a word of news.

2417. To the Earl of Shelburne.

My Lord,

Nothing but the dread of ostentation would have prevented me long ago from taking the step I am now going to take, and which obliges me to give your Lordship this trouble, which I flatter myself you will excuse in pity to the feelings of a man who has long suffered in silence under the painful sensation of being reckoned in any manner a burthen to the public.

From the moment that the necessities of this country made reformation of expense called for, I not only approved of such a design, but was most ready to be an object of it. So far from any wish of being exempted, I did everything

[3] Probably Lord Ashburnham. See letter to Mason of May 31, 1783.

Letter 2417.—Not in C.; reprinted from Lord Orford's *Works* (1798), vol. ii. pp. 390–1.

that became me as a benefited servant of the public to lay open my situation to those delegated to inquire into the state of offices. I ordered my deputy to give the most minute account of my advantages, and to offer to the commissioners every light that it was possible for me to give about my own office. I can boldly say, that every Board of Treasury that has been employed since reformation was started, must bear me witness that publicly or privately they never heard my name to any application for favour or mitigation of my lot. I could go farther, if the repugnance that I have to saying anything of myself did not enjoin me silence, as it has during a long period of very irksome reflections on my standing in the light of one chargeable to the public, without any merit on my part.

But, my Lord, when I read in the papers on coming to town to-day that my office of Usher of the Exchequer has not only been alleged in the House of Commons as an expensive one, but as a bar to the correction of great waste, I can no longer be silent. I must sacrifice my aversion for parade to my duty; and must beg leave to say to your Lordship, that I entreat that my patent may be no obstacle to any necessary reformation. I am ready to consent to anything that Parliament shall think proper to do. The legislature without my consent may do what it pleases, but it will have my perfect and cheerful acquiescence in whatever it shall please to ordain about me and my office. I am ready to surrender my patent, and shall be content with whatever shall be thought enough for me by a new regulation. I wish my age of sixty-six and my infirmities did not reduce this tender to a very immeritorious one, for to give up what I have very little time to enjoy is no very heroic effort.

But though I am little solicitous about myself, I do feel for my deputy and clerk, who have long faithfully executed

all the trouble of my office, and have wives and families unprovided for, but during my life. I should hope to have them considered; and though I have no merit to plead myself, I flatter myself that this testimonial to their integrity will have a little weight.

The great confidence I have in your Lordship's goodness and honour makes me take the liberty of addressing this letter to you, for two reasons; one to authorize your Lordship to take what step you please with regard to my office, and the other, that you would not produce this letter unless necessary to my vindication. I had still rather bear the vexation of what has been said on my place in public, than seem to affect any vainglorious self-denial. It shall suffice me to have deposited my justification in so honourable a bosom as your Lordship's, unless I should be called on to clear myself more publicly.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

June 19, 1783. HOR. WALPOLE.

2418. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, June 20, 1783.

I did suspect, Madam, from the *sort* of commendations that I heard bestowed, and from the *sort* of persons who bestowed them, that I should not be much edified by the *improvements* of Hatfield. The Earl and Countess[1] did me the honour of inviting me to see them two years ago; but as I neither love to flatter nor disoblige, I have not been—*and two years* have certainly not made me more of *a going* disposition. Brocket Hall[2] I never did see, and nothing

LETTER 2418.—[1] Of Salisbury.
[2] Near Hatfield; the seat of Viscount Melbourne.

has made me more going *thither*. When I play for green gowns with fair nymphs, *they* are not of the coterie of the nymphs and swains that I should meet there, *il s'en faut beaucoup*. Lord Chewton won the prize, and consequently there would be no gallantry in the case.

I came to town yesterday, expecting, like Cibber, *to meet the revolution*[3], but I am told that all is readjusted. I am glad of it; I wish the present administration to last, which is not often the colour of my inclination towards ministries.

The month of June has been as abominable as any one of its ancestors in all the pedigree of the Junes. I was literally half-drowned on Sunday night. It rained through two stories, and into the green closet at Strawberry, and my bedchamber was wet to its smock. The gutters were stopped, or could not carry off the deluge fast enough. Margaret prayed to St. Rainbow, but as he never appears till it is too late, we were forced to have recourse to mortal help, and litter all the floors with hay to soak up the inundation.

I had a worse woe the next night. The house of De Guines had notified to Lady Aylesbury their intention of visiting Strawberry, and she had proposed to bring them to breakfast. At first I refused, but reflecting that they might invade me unawares, like the Duc de Chartres, I had agreed that she should bring them yesterday; but, lo! on Monday morning Lady Pembroke wrote to me that she would bring them to drink tea that evening. I told her my arrangement, but left it to her option to do as she pleased. From dinner-time I sat at the window watching for them, and taking every old woman with a basket on her head for a coach-and-six. It rained all the time, as it had done the preceding evening. At last, at half an hour after

[3] On June 15 the ministers were on the point of resigning, but on the 16th the King begged the Duke of Portland to continue in office.

seven, as I had left it to their option, and the night was so bad and dark, I concluded they had given it up, and called for my tea—but, alas! at a quarter before eight the bell rang at the gate—and, behold, a procession of the Duke, his two daughters, the French Ambassador[4] (on whom I had meant to sink myself), Lady Pembroke, Lord Herbert, and Lord Robert[5]. The first word M. de Guines said was to beg I would show them all I could—imagine, Madam, what I could show them when it was pitch dark!

Of all houses upon earth, mine, from the painted glass and overhanging trees, wants the sun the most, besides the star chamber and passage being obscured on purpose to raise the gallery. They ran their foreheads against Henry VII, and took the grated door of the tribune for the dungeon of the castle. I mustered all the candlesticks in the house, but before they could be lighted up, the young ladies, who, by the way, are extremely natural, agreeable, and civil, were seized with a panic of highwaymen, and wanted to go. I laughed and said I believed there was no danger, for that I had not been robbed these two years. However, I was not quite in the right; they were stopped in Knightsbridge by two footpads, but Lady Pembroke having lent them a servant besides their own unique, they escaped—and so much for the French and the rain: I wish the latter were as near going as the former! To-morrow I dine at Gunnersbury, and then I hope my troubles will be over for the summer.

I called on Lady Frances Douglas, but could not deliver your Ladyship's commands, for she was just going to town to be presented, and did not let me in.

[4] The Comte d'Adhémar.
[5] Lord Robert Spencer, brother of Lady Pembroke.

2419. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, June 24, 1783.

Though your Lordship's partiality extends even to my letters, you must perceive that they grow as antiquated as the writer. News are the soul of letters: when we give them a body of our own invention, it is as unlike to life as a statue. I have withdrawn so much from the world, that the newspapers know everything before me, especially since they have usurped the province of telling everything, private as well as public; and consequently a great deal more than I should wish to know, or like to report. When I do hear the transactions of much younger people, they do not pass from my ears into my memory; nor does your Lordship interest yourself more about them than I do. Yet still, when one reduces one's department to such narrow limits, one's correspondence suffers by it. However, as I desire to show only my gratitude and attachment, not my wit, I shall certainly obey your Lordship as long as you are content to read my letters, after I have told you fairly how little they can entertain you.

For imports of French, I believe we shall have few more. They have not ruined us so totally by the war, much less enriched themselves so much by it, but that they who have been here, complained so piteously of the expensiveness of England, that probably they will deter others from a similar jaunt; nor, such is their fickleness, are the French constant to anything but admiration of themselves. Their Anglomanie, I hear, has mounted, or descended, from our customs to our persons. English people are in fashion at Versailles. A Mr. Ellis[1], who wrote some pretty verses at Bath two or

Letter 2419. — [1] George Ellis (1753–1815), scholar and author. He was a contributor to the *Rolliad*, and was the friend of Scott and Canning. He founded the *Anti-Jacobin* in conjunction with the latter. Walpole alludes to his *Poetical Tales by Sir Gregory Gander*, published in 1778.

three years ago, is a favourite there. One who was so, or may be still, the *beau Dillon*, came upon a very different errand; in short, to purchase at any price a book written by Linguet, which was just coming out, called *Antoinette*. That will tell your Lordship why the *beau Dillon* was the messenger[2].

Monsieur de Guignes and his daughters came hither; but it was at eight o'clock at night in the height of the deluge. You may be sure I was much flattered by such a visit! I was forced to light candles to show them anything; and must have lighted the moon to show them the views. If this is their way of seeing England, they might as well look at it with an opera-glass from the shore of Calais.

Mr. Mason is to come to me on Sunday, and will find me mighty busy in making my lock of hay, which is not yet cut. I don't know why, but people are always more anxious about their hay than their corn, or twenty other things that cost them more. I suppose my Lord Chesterfield, or some such dictator, made it fashionable to care about one's hay. Nobody betrays solicitude about getting in his rents.

We have exchanged spring and summer for autumn and winter, as well as day for night. If religion or law enjoined people to love light, and prospects, and verdure, I should not wonder if perverseness made us hate them; no, nor if society made us prefer living always in town to solitude and beauty. But that is not the case. The most fashionable hurry into the country at Christmas and Easter, let the weather be ever so bad; and the finest ladies, who will go no whither till eleven at night, certainly pass more tiresome hours in London alone than they would in the country. But all this is no business of mine: they do what they like, and so do I; and I am exceedingly tolerant about people who are perfectly indifferent to me. The sun and the

[2] He was a favourite of Queen Marie Antoinette.

seasons were not gone out of fashion when I was young, and I may do what I will with them now I am old: for fashion is fortunately no law but to its devotees. Were I five-and-twenty, I dare to say I should think every whim of my contemporaries very wise, as I did then. In one light I am always on the side of the young, for they only silently despise those who do not conform to their ordonnances; but age is very apt to be angry at the change of customs, and partial to others no better founded. It is happy when we are occupied by nothing more serious. It is happy for a nation when mere fashions are a topic that can employ its attention; for, though dissipation may lead to graver moments, it commences with ease and tranquillity: and they at least who live before the scene shifts are fortunate, considering and comparing themselves with the various regions who enjoy no parallel felicity. I confess my reflections are *couleur de rose* at present. I did not much expect to live to see peace, without far more extensive ruin than has fallen on us. I will not probe futurity in search of less agreeable conjectures. Prognosticators may see many seeds of dusky hue; but I am too old to look forwards. Without any omens, common sense tells one, that in the revolution of ages nations must have unprosperous periods. But why should I torment myself for what may happen in twenty years after my death, more than for what may happen in two hundred? Nor shall I be more interested in the one than in the other. There is no indifference for my country: I wish it could always be happy; but so I do to all other countries. Yet who could ever pass a tranquil moment, if such future speculations vexed him?

Adieu, my good Lord! I doubt this letter has more marks of senility than the one I announced at the beginning. When I had no news to send you, it was no reason for tiring you with commonplaces. But your Lordship's indul-

gence spoils me. Does not it look as if I thought that, because you commend my letters, you would like whatever I say? Will not Lady Strafford think that I abuse your patience? I ask both your pardons, and am to both a most devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2420. To ANTONY HIGHMORE [1].

Strawberry Hill, June 28, 1783.

I AM much obliged to you, Sir, for the favour of your drawing; an honour I could not expect from a gentleman with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted; which last circumstance I hope will be my excuse if I do not direct this letter properly.

You have expressed well, Sir, what I meant except one particular, in which perhaps I have not delivered myself clearly. I intended to describe the figure as detaching itself not only from the frame but from the ground, for, as I have said, the figure retired into the chamber at the end of the gallery [2]: it would be more awkward to suppose the whole picture walking, and not the mere figure itself. You will, I flatter myself, Sir, forgive this observation, and be assured I am with great respect, &c.,

HORACE WALPOLE.

2421. To RICHARD GOUGH.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1783.

MR. WALPOLE is extremely obliged to Mr. Gough for his magnificent present [1], and very glad to have had an oppor-

LETTER 2420.—[1] A draughtsman, and son of the painter of that name. He was born in 1719 and died in 1799.

[2] See *The Castle of Otranto*, ch. i.

LETTER 2421.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. vi. p. 286.

[1] A set of proof plates from the

tunity of contributing to so beautiful and valuable a work. Mr. Walpole should have thanked Mr. Gough sooner; but he did [not] know how to direct, till he had sent to Mr. Nichols.

2422. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 8, 1783.

Two days ago, who should walk into my room but Sir Horace Mann,—not *the* Sir Horace indeed that I could have most wished to see, and whom I have not seen in two-and-forty years; and whom, alas!—yet one I was very glad to see! I turned him round to look for his wings; for he certainly flies! He tells me charming miracles of your health and youth. I hope the goddess of correspondence is proud of us, and intends we shall write to one another as long as Abraham and Methusalem would have done, if they had learnt to write.

Your nephew had not unpacked his portmanteau; so, I have not received Cavalier Mozzi's or my own letters, but shall have them before this departs.

News I have none, or should have written to you before now. We have had one or two qualms, which looked very much as if the new ministers did not sit easy upon a certain stomach. They were very near discharged on the establishment of the heir[1]; but all was compromised. The Parliament rises next week. If nothing happens *then*, the summer will probably conclude tranquilly.

My namesake[2], cousin, and nephew has got a son. As it will be the descendant of my father as well as of my uncle, I hope it will be the heir of the family. One symptom

Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain, published in 1786.

Letter 2422. — [1] The Prince of Wales.

[2] Horatio, eldest son of the second Lord Walpole, had married Sophia, youngest daughter of Charles Churchill, Esq., by Lady Maria Walpole, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole by his second wife, and half-sister of the writer of these letters. *Walpole.*

looks as if it would be. Its father wrote to Lord Orford to ask him to be godfather; he not only consented graciously, but invited the parents to Houghton, with this frantic though promising addition, 'that though he had sold his collection of pictures, of which too many were by the same hands (as if one could have too many Carlo Marattis, Rubens's, and Vandykes!), he hoped my cousin would be satisfied, as his Lordship had gotten *two* excellent Ciprianis!' This Cipriani would not have been worthy to paint the dog-kennel, when the house possessed its original collection; Cipriani is to Guido, as his Lordship is to his grandfather.

I have another nephew going to Florence—for I have nephews enough to people the Promised Land. It is George Cholmondeley, son of Robert, consequently my great-nephew; for I have lived to count third and fourth generations. This George is a young man of sense and honourable principles, and among the best of my nepotism. He has claimed my recommendation to you, and I trust will deserve it better than some of my nephews have done: he has some humour, and some voice, and is musical; but he has not good health, nor always good spirits.

Berkeley Square, July 10.

I came to town yesterday on summons from Lucas, and this morning he and Sharpe and Mr. Duane were with me. Sharpe declared that he had advised Cav. Mozzi to divide the ten thousand pounds with my Lord, but had received no answer. I said I knew Cav. Mozzi's disposition to agreement; but Mr. Duane and I could not act so summarily. In one word, I wish to save six or seven thousand pounds for Cav. Mozzi, as I see how much pains Lucas has used to get more, whereas little have been employed on the other side. Sharpe said, too, that the Cavalier would have consented, if Lady Orford's woman had not dissuaded him. I proposed,

and Mr. Duane seconded me, that Sharpe and Lucas should state what claims, and to what amount, each reciprocally allows of the other; and then it would be easier for us referees to split the difference. This has brought matters to a point, and I hope one more meeting may terminate the business.

I have not yet heard again from your nephew, but conclude he has sent the letters to Strawberry, which my suddenly coming to town may have prevented my receiving.

Adieu! I am writing after midnight, and panting for breath: the weather is wonderfully sultry, and great mischief has been done by lightning in the counties. Were I not in town, I should delight in such Florentine nights.

2423. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 15, 1783.

I was in town last week, Madam, and just as I was returning I was told poor Mr. Morrice was dead, and Miss Howe has heard so, too; but as I have not seen it yet in the papers, I would flatter myself it is not true, for the only truths which the newspapers tell are those which will give concern to anybody. I am sorry your Ladyship has suffered so much by the heat—for me, I am below all weather, for none affects me. If it could, it would during the two days I passed in London, where I was forced to meet Lord Orford's lawyers. Indeed, as much as I love to have summer in summer, I am tired of this weather—

> The dreaded east is all the wind that blows[1].

It parches the leaves, makes the turf crisp, claps the doors, blows the papers about, and keeps one in a constant mist that gives no dew, but might as well be smoke. The sun

Letter 2423.—[1] Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, iv. 20.

sets like a pewter plate red-hot; and then in a moment appears the moon, at a distance, of the same complexion, just as the same orb, in a moving picture, serves for both. I wish modern philosophers had not disturbed all our ideas! Two hundred good years ago celestial and terrestrial affairs hung together, and if a country was out of order it was comfortable to think that the planets ordered, or sympathized with its ails. A sun shorn of his beams, and a moon that only serves to make darkness visible, are mighty homogeneal to a distracted state; and when their ministry is changed every twelve hours, without allaying the heat or mending the weather, Father Holinshed would have massed the whole in the casualties of the reign, and expected no better till he was to tap a new accession.

As I have meditated so profoundly on the season, you will perceive, Madam, that I had nothing else to talk of, and, consequently, did not write till I had some answer to make. With your letter, I received one from Lord Chewton, to tell me the birth of his daughter[2], for which event I was anxious. I do not mean that I wished it a girl, nor affect the apathy of the Duke of Devonshire, for though Lord Chewton is no king of the Peak, a boy can shift better than a poor girl. However, dear Lady Chewton is perfectly well, and I am easy.

News I have heard none this month, but the deaths of Irish peeresses, Lady Middleton[3] and Lady Gage[4]; but as Hibernian peers spring up like mushrooms, or are mushrooms, I suppose there will be as great plenty of ermine in that country as ever,—perhaps soon of their own growth, without a drawback from *our* Custom House! Here, I am

[2] Hon. Wilhelmina Maria Waldegrave, afterwards Lady Maria Micklethwayt.

[3] Lady Frances Pelham, second daughter of first Earl of Chichester; m. (1778) George Brodrick, fourth Viscount Midleton.

[4] Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Sampson Gideon; m. (1757) William Hall Gage, second Viscount Gage.

told, no more is to be issued. As the *sun's*[5] train is much curtailed, I suppose he thinks he has stars enough around him: but to change the topic, I was glad that the late Chancellor and his virtue were dragged through the kennel[6].

I must shift the subject once more, and talk of another no better, myself, or finish my letter. I have given one or two dinners to blue-stockings, and one pedigree dinner to my cousin, the Portuguese beauty, and her husband, and his two nephews, Horatio and Thomas[7]; and I have been again commanded to Gunnersbury, where I found Prince William. He had been with the Princess in the morning, and returned of his own accord to dinner. She presented me to him, and I attempted, at the risk of tumbling on my nose, to kiss his hand, but he would not let me. You may trust me, Madam, who am not apt to be intoxicated with royalty, that he is charming. Lively, cheerful, talkative, manly, well-bred, sensible, and exceedingly proper in all his replies. You may judge how good-humoured he is, when I tell you that he was in great spirits all day, though with us old women—perhaps he thought it preferable to Windsor!

Another day the Jerninghams brought to see my house—whom do you think?—only a *Luxembourg*, a *Lusignan*, and a *Montfort*! I never felt myself so much in the castle of Otranto. It sounded as if a company of noble crusaders were come to sojourn with me before they embarked for the

[5] The King.

[6] During the discussion on the bill for economical reform 'Rigby proposed by a clause to put the Chancellor Thurlow upon the same foot with the other Tellers, as if he had taken the reversion when it was offered. He had bragged much of not taking it, and had thrown out hints as if such grants were illegal. . . . Charles Fox, whom he had lately termed a bankrupt, violently opposed the clause, as did Sheridan, and it was rejected by a majority of eight, and with great disgrace to Thurlow.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 633.)

[7] Hon. Horatio Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford, and Thomas, eldest son of Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Holy Land. Still I was a very uncourteous *châtelain.* I did not appear. In short, Mr. Mason, whom I had not seen for a year, was at dinner with me, and was to pass but that one day with me—*cedant arma togae*—I preferred the *Heroic Epistle* to a troop of heroes; that is, the supposed author of the one to what I do not suppose the others.

You bid me watch my purse, Madam, when I am in good company. In truth, I am not apt to watch it: yet without my taking the smallest precaution to guard it, it has escaped through two *Houses*[8] full of the *best* company in England, and in which there were *bishops* too.

Alas! here is half my letter about myself, and half of that about what I have *not* been doing. It shows how antiquated I am, and how little I know. To complete my personal journal, I send you a vile pun of my own making. Miss Pope has been at Mrs. Clive's this week, and I had not been able to call on them. I wrote a line of excuse, but hoped very soon to salute Miss *Pope's eye.* Excuse my *radotage*—but what better can you expect?

2424. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1783.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for your goodness to Madame de la Villebaque, of which she has herself told me too: she says she is trying to make interest in the way you recommended to her. I am extremely concerned that it is totally out of my power to return your kindness; nor did I want the addition of gratitude to excite me to serve you or any child of yours. Your son Thomas will have explained to you that [it] is not even in General Conway's

[8] The Houses of Parliament, where Horace Walpole's sinecures had been discussed.

Letter 2424.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 66–70.

power to replace your son[1] yet, as he would have been happy to do when he knew it would so much oblige me; but the late regulations of the army have not left it at his disposition. Should I by any unexpected chance be able to be useful to my cousin Thomas, I shall seize it eagerly. He has every quality of head and heart that can endear him to me. But I am so useless and of so little consequence to ministers that it is not very likely; nor are there many from whom I would ask a favour.

Your son and I have been together at Lord Dacre's, where I assure you he is a great favourite. Next week I hope to see him here.

I believe your political prospectus was a very just one; but I now live so much out of the world, and in so narrow a circle, that I am entirely ignorant both of what is going on, and of what is to be done. I have, you know, a very high opinion of Mr. Fox's abilities, and believe him much more capable than any man of restoring this country to some credit. But I know various reasons, and you can guess them, why he may not have it in his power. Conjectures on futurity are very idle. For sagacity, I pretend to none, nor much depend on it in those that have most—for this reason: the wisest penetration does not condescend to calculate the thousand foolish reasons that weigh in, and determine, political events. It may know what ought to be the consequence of such or such measures; but the collateral decisions of chance or absurdity produce such rubs or give a wrong bias that a foreseer is seldom a true prophet.

It would be still more idle in me, whose life is drawn to the dregs, to busy myself with speculations or future scenes, of which I shall probably have but a glimpse.

[1] Thomas Walpole's second son, Lambert, was in the army. He was killed in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798.

There is little merit in loving one's country or wishing its prosperity, for it is as natural as to love individuals. But, when one totters on the verge of quitting it, the passion is weakened by its extensiveness. One regards the state of one's country always with some reference to self, to one's posterity, one's family, or one's friends. When one is to bid it adieu, one wishes one's country may be happy while these connections shall last, and by the preference for what one has loved, one wishes one's country may always be prosperous. But that *always* is so vague and indefinite a desire, the impossibility of any one country always prospering is so certain, that, however fervent Father Paul's ejaculation *Esto perpetua!* might be at the moment of utterance, he would not have found that it had much meaning if he had analysed it. When one wishes what is impossible, there is more piety than sense in the effusion.

Having lived so long and seen so much, I could still with more facility moralize backwards than forwards. But you and I, dear Sir, have so many parallel reasons for making many of the same reflections, that I should be only wording your own thoughts. Besides, I am writing a letter and not a dissertation. And yet, perhaps, one who has been a silent spectator of the *whole* change of scene, could suggest many observations, that have not been made by the actors, nor by those who have come upon the stage in the middle of the drama, and will still less occur to posterity. But you, though much younger, have seen almost all that has operated our present situation. I say *almost*, because I throw the date farther back than most men, and should make some stare who are little aware of what I mean. Yet you, I believe, want no key to my hypothesis.

I do not pretend to send you news. At present I actually

have none. Your son is, I believe, a most punctual correspondent; and, as I have the satisfaction of seeing him often, he very seldom but knows whatever I happen to know. Nor will I make professions to you. They would probably be vain as to effects; and of their sincerity in intention, I trust you have no doubt. What then remains but to repeat that I am

Most cordially yours,

H. W.?

Aug. 7th.—This letter has been written this fortnight, as you will perceive; but I waited for your son to send it to you. He has now been here for two or three days, but leaves me to-morrow to my concern. I wish I could make such a dull life as mine more entertaining to him. I do think it great condescension when he gives any time to such an antiquated relation.

2425. To Lady Browne.

Wednesday.

I am returned, Madam, but with the gout in my ancle, so that I was brought downstairs by two servants; but as I can now hobble a little, I flatter myself it will not be a fit, but go off. If I am able to walk to-morrow, I will wait on your Ladyship to the Duchess, or let you know if I cannot.

Mr. Townley[1] was so obliging as to leave a note to tell me that Mr. Morrice is better, is at Lausanne, and passes the winter at Naples. I saw Lord Spencer go by my door yesterday in his chariot, and they say he is a little better.

Letter 2425.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Messrs. Pearson, 5 Pall Mall Place, S.W.

[1] John Towneley (d. 1813).

2426. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday evening, July 23.

As your Ladyship interests yourself about Mr. Morrice, these are to certify you that he is alive; and, I dare to say, merry. Mr. Townley, uncle of the statuarist[1], and with whom I once dined, at the Grove[2], came to see my house yesterday, and left word that Mr. Morrice is not only not dead, but better, and at Lausanne, and purposes to winter at Naples; which, methinks, is risking his life at least as much as trying to preserve it, for the earthquakes do not seem at all to have retired into their own channel.

I have been in town to see Lady Chewton, and found her excellent well, and suckling her infanta without mercy. I believe she will be a more staid nurse than the Duchess of Devonshire, who probably will stuff her poor babe[3] into her knotting-bag when she wants to play at macao, and forget it.

More French are just come to see the house, a Viscount and Marquis de St. Chamant and a Baron de Montesquieu. I could not leave the blue room to their sight, for I have the gout to-day both in my ancle and left hand, but I think it will not be a fit, for the pain is already gone, though it came but in the night. Are you not prodigiously glad, Madam, that somebody whom you never saw is dead at the farthest end of the globe? My neighbours at Twickenham are overjoyed at the death of Hyder Aly, who, I suppose, they think lived in Lombard Street.

My visitors are gone already: it is literally true that they

Letter 2426.—[1] Charles Towneley (1737–1807), of Towneley, Lancashire, who formed a fine collection of antique marbles, purchased for the British Museum in 1805.

[2] Mr. Morice's house at Chiswick, where Mr. Towneley also lived.

[3] Lady Georgiana Dorothy Cavendish (July 12, 1783–1858), afterwards Countess of Carlisle.

arrived while I was writing the last paragraph but one, and went away as I finished the last, though I certainly do not write slowly. They are gone to Hampton Court, and return to France to-morrow. Don't you like seeing a house in the time one can write eight lines; and a country in less than one can wash one's hands? I wish all who come to see my house stayed no longer.

2427. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday [July 27, 1783].

Though I begin my letter on and have dated it Sunday, I recollect that it may miss you if you go to town on Tuesday, and therefore I shall not send it to the post till to-morrow. I can give you but an indifferent account of myself. I went to Lord Dacre's; but whether the heat and fatigue were too much for me, or whether the thunder turned me sour, for I am at least as weak as small-beer, I came back with the gout in my left hand and right foot. The latter confined me for three days; but though my ancle is still swelled, I do not stay in my house: however, I am frightened, and shall venture no more expeditions yet; for my hands and feet are both so lame, that I am neither comfortable to myself or anybody else, abroad, when I must confine *them*, stay by myself, or risk pain, which the least fatigue gives me.

At this moment I have a worse embargo even than lameness on me. The Prince d'Hessenstein has written to offer me a visit—I don't know when. I have just answered his note, and endeavoured to limit its meaning to the shortest sense I could, by proposing to give him a dinner or a break-

Letter 2427.—Collated with original in possession of the late Sir T. V. Lister. Hitherto dated Aug. 27, 1783. (See *Notes and Queries*, Feb. 9, 1901.)

fast. I would keep my bed rather than crack our northern French together for twelve hours.

I know nothing upon earth but my own disasters. Another is, that all yesterday I thought all my gold-fish stolen. I am not sure that they are not; but they tell me they keep at the bottom of the water from the hot weather. It is all to be ladled out to-morrow morning, and then I shall know whether they are gone or boiled.

Whenever the weather cools to an English consistence, I will see you at Park Place or in town; but I think not at the former before the end of next month, unless I recover more courage than I have at present; for if I was to get a real fit, and be confined to my bed in such sultry days, I should not have strength to go through it. I have just fixed three new benches round my bowling-green, that I may make four journeys of the tour. Adieu!

Monday morning.

As I was rising this morning, I received an express from your daughter[1], that she will bring Madame de Cambis and Lady Melbourne to dinner here to-morrow. I shall be vastly pleased with the party, but it puts Philip and Margaret to their wits' end to get them a dinner: nothing is to be had here; we must send to Richmond, and Kingston, and Brentford. I must borrow Mr. Ellis's cook, and somebody's confectioner, and beg somebody's fruit, for I have none of these of my own, nor know anything of the matter; but that is Philip and Margaret's affair, and not mine; and the worse the dinner is, the more Gothic Madame de Cambis will think it.

I have been emptying my pond, which was more in my head than the honour of my kitchen; and in the mud of the troubled water I have found all my gold, as Dunning

[1] The Hon. Mrs. Damer.

and Barré did last year. I have taken out fifteen young fish of a year and a half old for Lady Aylesbury, and reserved them as an offering worthy of Amphitrite in the vase, in the cat's vase [2], amidst 'the azure flowers that blow.' They are too portly to be carried in a smelling-bottle in your pocket. I wish you could plan some way of a waterman's calling for them, and transporting them to Park Place. They have not changed their colour, but will next year, at least so they say. How lucky it would be, should you meet your daughter about Turnham Green, and turn back with them!

2428. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 30, 1783.

I have received yours of the 12th, and Cav. Mozzi's from your nephew. To the latter's I can say nothing new at present. The last time we met, Mr. Duane and I desired Sharpe and Lucas to try how near they could come in adjusting the separate demands of Lady Orford and my Lord, after we had struck off the unfounded ones on either side. I have no doubt but the two lawyers could have agreed in an hour's time; that is, that they would have agreed to give much advantage to my Lord: but as they choose, I suppose, to seem to deliberate, as physicians do who retire to consult in another room and there talk news, Sharpe and Lucas have taken some weeks to consider. I hope Mr. Duane will see through their juggle; I shall be guided by him.

A thousand thanks to you for the *Fatti Farnesiani*, but you must tell me the prices, that I may pay your nephew. Do not imagine that I send to Italy for everything I want

[2] The vase made famous by Gray's *Ode on a Favourite Cat, drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes.*

at your expense; I cost you enough in trouble. It would truly be more kind of you if you said at once, 'I paid so much, or so much.' As you did not, I insist on your naming the price in your next.

I shall not believe that when the Czarina has whetted her talons, she will go to roost without scratching anybody. They say the plague has cried Holà! nay, that it is at Dantzic. Our *Gazette* has rung out the bell. The summer is so sultry that it would be formidable indeed!

I have not the honour of being acquainted with Lord and Lady Algernon Percy: both he and I go so little into public, that I never saw him above once in my life. She is generally commended.

Your nephew did not name his distress about his daughter, and therefore I certainly did not. I pity him; but what can his remonstrances do? passions are not to be allayed by words: love does not lie in the ear.

Thank you for dispensing with me about inoculation. It is most true that its virtues have not suffered in the smallest degree by the late accident; yet, as there was *no* reason it should, I wonder it did not.

I have not a tittle of news for you, good or bad, public or private. It is better that correspondence should suffer, than be supplied by wars and calamities.

We have swarms of French daily; but they come as if they had laid wagers that there is no such place as England, and only wanted to verify its existence, or that they had a mind to dance a minuet on English ground; for they turn on their heel the moment after landing. Three came to see this house last week, and walked through it literally while I wrote eight lines of a letter; for I heard them go up the stairs, and heard them go down, exactly in the time I was finishing no longer a paragraph. It were happy for me had nobody more curiosity than a Frenchman; who

is never struck with anything but what he has seen every day at Paris. I am tormented all day and every day by people that come to see my house, and have no enjoyment of it in summer. It would be even in vain to say that the plague was here. I remember such a report in London when I was a child, and my uncle, Lord Townshend, then Secretary of State, was forced to send guards to keep off the crowd from the house in which the plague was said to be; they would go and *see* the plague! Had I been the master of the house, I should have said, as I would to kings who pretend to cure the king's evil, '*You* cure the evil!—*you* are the evil!' '*You* see the plague!—*you* are the plague!'

Since I began my letter, Mrs. Noel has told me who is your nephew's daughter's inamorato. I now pity him even more than I did. There is madness in the lover's family—how can a parent consent to such an union? I am very tender-hearted on love-cases, especially to women, whose happiness does really depend, for some time at least, on the accomplishment of their wishes: they cannot conceive that another swain might be just as charming. I am not so indulgent to men, who do know that one romance is as good as another, and that the binding is of little consequence. But must not the blood of a father recoil, when his child would unite with frenzy, and for grandchildren, would bring him lunatics? Oh, I approve your poor nephew's repugnance. I have seen the lover's mother in her moods, and know but *too well* the peril of such alliances! That, and the royal malady I named in my last paragraph, are not enough guarded against. Both sometimes lie dormant for a generation, but rarely are eradicated. On the want of fortune I should be much less restive; and for the profession, if a girl is in love, how can she secure such a prospect of felicity as by marrying a clergyman? I am

a little indelicate; but I know why Providence gave us passions; and therefore, however we may dress up and dignify the idea, the most romantic maiden upon earth, whether aware of it or not, is in love with the gender, though its more visible accompaniments may have made the impression. Your Orianas therefore find their account better in a Levite than in an Amadis. I have often wondered dowager Orianas do not always replace Amadis with a cassock. It is almost the only chance they have of not being disappointed. If the bell-wether strays after other ewes, the noise he makes betrays him, and the old crone is sure of reclaiming him. I beg pardon of goddesses for so ungallant a comment; but, however heretical it may sound to ears of twenty, it would be solid advice if dropped in those of forty. Adieu!

2429. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 1, 1783.

It would be great happiness indeed to me, my dear Lord, if such nothings as my letters could contribute to any part of your Lordship's; but as your own partiality bestows their chief merit on them, you see they owe more to your friendship than to the writer. It is not my interest to depreciate them; much less to undermine the foundation of their sole worth. Yet it would be dishonest not to warn your Lordship, that if my letters have had any intrinsic recommendation, they must lose of it every day. Years and frequent returns of gout have made a ruin of me. Dullness, in the form of indolence, grows upon me. I am inactive, lifeless, and so indifferent to most things, that I neither inquire after nor remember any topics that might enliven my letters. Nothing is so insipid as my way of passing my time. But I need not specify what my letters

speak. They can have no spirit left; and would be perfectly inanimate, if attachment and gratitude to your Lordship were as liable to be extinguished by old age as our more amusing qualities. I make no new connections, but cherish those that remain with all the warmth of youth and the piety of grey hairs.

The weather here has been, and is, with very few intervals, sultry to this moment. I think it has been of service to me; though by overheating myself I had a few days of lameness. The harvest is half over already all round us; and so pure, that not a poppy or cornflower is to be seen. Every field seems to have been weeded like Brisco's bowling-green. If Ceres, who is at least as old as many of our fashionable ladies, loves tricking herself out in flowers as they do, she must be mortified: and with more reason; for she looks well always with topknots of ultramarine and vermilion, which modern goddesses do not for half so long as they think they do. As Providence showers so many blessings on us, I wish the Peace may confirm them! Necessary I am sure it was; and when it cannot restore us, where should we have been had the war continued? Of our situation and prospect I confess my opinion is melancholy, not from present politics but from past. We flung away the most brilliant position, I doubt, for a long season! With politics I have totally done. I wish the present ministers may last; for I think better of their principles than of those of their opponents (with a few salvos on both sides), and so I do of their abilities. But it would be folly in me to concern myself about new generations. How little a way can I see of their progress!

I am rather surprised at the new Countess of Denbigh[1].

LETTER 2429.—[1] Sarah (d. 1814), daughter of Edward Farnham, of Quorndon, Leicestershire, and widow of Sir Charles Halford, seventh Baronet; m. (July 21, 1783), as his second wife, Basil Fielding, sixth Earl of Denbigh.

How could a woman be ambitious of resembling Prometheus, to be pawed and clawed and gnawed by a vulture[2]? I beg your earldom's pardon; but I could not conceive that a coronet was so very tempting!

Lady Browne is quite recovered, unless she relapses from what we suffer at Twickenham Park from a Lord Northesk[3], an old seaman, who is come to Richmond on a visit to the Duke of Montrose. I think the poor man must be out of his senses, at least he talks us out of ours. It is the most incessant and incoherent rhapsody that ever was heard. He sits by the card-table, and pours on Mrs. Noel all that ever happened in his voyages or his memory. He details the ship's allowance, and talks to her as if she was his first-mate. Then in the mornings he carries his daughter to town to see St. Paul's, and the Tower, and Westminster Abbey; and at night disgorges all he has seen, till we don't know the ace of spades from Queen Elizabeth's pocket pistol in the Armoury. Mercy on us! And mercy on your Lordship too! Why should you be stunned with that alarum? Have you had your earthquake, my Lord? Many have had theirs. I assure you I have had mine. Above a week ago, when broad awake, the doors of the cabinet by my bedside rattled, without a breath of wind. I imagined somebody was walking on the leads, or had broken into the room under me. It was between four and five in the morning. I rang my bell. Before my servant could come it happened again; and was exactly like the horizontal tremor I felt from the earthquake some years ago. As I had rung once, it is plain I was awake. I rang again; but heard nothing more. I am quite persuaded there was some commotion; nor is it surprising that the dreadful eruptions

[2] The Earl of Denbigh, as a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, bore his arms on the breast of an Imperial eagle.

[3] George Carnegie (1716–1792), sixth Earl of Northesk, Admiral of the White.

of fire on the coasts of Italy and Sicily should have occasioned some alteration that has extended faintly hither, and contributed to the heats and mists that have been so extraordinary. George Montagu said of our last earthquake, that it was so tame you might have stroked it. It is comfortable to live where one can reason on them without dreading them! What satisfaction should you have in having erected such a monument of your taste, my Lord, as Wentworth Castle, if you did not know but it might be overturned in a moment and crush you? Sir William Hamilton is expected: he has been groping in all those devastations. Of all vocations I would not be a professor of earthquakes! I prefer studies that are *couleur de rose*; nor would ever think of calamities, if I can do nothing to relieve them. Yet this is a weakness of mind that I do not defend. They are more respectable who can behold philosophically the great theatre of events, or rather this little theatre of ours! In some ampler sphere, they may look on the catastrophe of Messina as we do on kicking to pieces an ant-hill.

Bless me! what a farrago is my letter! It is like the extracts of books in a monthly magazine! I had no right to censure poor Lord Northesk's ramblings! Lady Strafford will think he has infected me. Good night, my dear Lord and Lady!

Your ever devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

2430. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1783.

It is shameful, Madam, to keep a letter unanswered that came kindly to ask how I did; but, good Lord! I hate to write, when I have no other, no better topic than myself.

My last was filled with nothing else! for alas a day! it is all I know! and never was anything less worth knowing or repeating! The sultry season did me a great deal of good and a great deal of harm. It agreed with me like a charm; but the nights were so hot, that I left off or kicked off all covering, and first I caught the gout in my ancle, then the rheumatism in my shoulder, and so was exceedingly well, except that I could not move hand or foot. Still I love to have summer in summer, and as our doggest days never produce earthquakes nor make us swallow shoals of insects with every mouthful, I never complain of them—not but I do think I felt an earthquake-ling a fortnight ago, between four and five in the morning, but it was a poor rickety thing, and could not have thrown down a house of cards. I hope the plague with which we are threatened *de par le Roi*, will prove as arrant a miscarriage. The Semiramis of the north, the devil take her, has fetched it to this side of the globe, and it may be added to the catalogue of her great exploits, which the French Academicians so much admire. I know the plague is not so horrid a thing as some people imagine—at least, Boccace chose such a period as a delicious one for telling stories. He makes a select company of young gentlemen and ladies shut themselves up in a country house, and relate novels to pass away the time, while all their relations and friends were swept away by cart-loads in the city.

Have you seen Lord Carlisle's tragedy[1], Madam? He has been so good as to send it to me. It has great merit; the language and imagery are beautiful, and the two capital scenes are very fine. The story is Sigismonda and Guiscard, but he has much improved the conduct, and steered clear of the indelicacy and absurdity of the original, which did not stop Dryden, who, knowing that he could tell anything

LETTER 2430.—[1] *The Father's Revenge.*

delightfully, did not mind what he told; or how could he have thought of making an old king sleep behind a bed instead of upon it? There are some parts that might be mended, and a situation or two too like what has been seen on the stage; yet I am sure your Ladyship will admire most of it. Do not imagine that I am prejudiced by the compliment of its being sent to me. I have read it twice, carefully, and liked it better the second time than the first.

I hear often of Lady Chewton, and perfectly good accounts, but I have not seen her since the first week, for I should be burnt as black as an Etruscan vase, if I went to my house in Berkeley Square in this weather—no disrespect to this day se'nnight, surely, Madam, last Saturday was still nearer to the torrid zone. I begin to think that the Rumbolds and Co. have robbed the Indies of their climate as well as of their gold and diamonds, and brought it home in ingots. You hoped that Hyder Aly would have extirpated our banditti—do not fear, Madam; I believe it will not be long before we are outcasts, like the Jews, and become pedlars like them, up and down the earth, with no country of our own.

I saw Captain Waldegrave at Lady Chewton's, and he was quite recovered of his accident; but I know nothing of him since.

I must tell you an excellent reply of a person your Ladyship scarce knows, and I, not at all. Lord Lewisham lately gave a dinner to a certain electoral prince[2] who is in England, and at which *à la mode de son pays* they drank very hard. The conversation turned on matrimony: the foreign *altesse* said he envied the Dukes of Devon and Rutland, who, though high and mighty princes too, had been at liberty to wed two charming women whom they liked; but for his part he supposed he should be forced to

[2] The Prince of Wales.

marry some ugly German B——, I forget the other letters of the word—and then, turning to the Irish Master of the Rolls[3], asked what *he* would advise him to do? 'Faith, Sir,' said the Master, 'I am not yet drunk enough to give advice to a Prince of —— about marrying.' I think it one of the best answers I ever heard. How many fools will think themselves sober enough to advise his *altesse* on whatever he consults them!

Apropos to matrimony, I want to consult your Ladyship very seriously: I am so tormented by droves of people coming to see my house, and Margaret gets such sums of money by showing it, that I have a mind to marry her, and so repay myself that way for what I have flung away to make my house quite uncomfortable to me. I am sure Lord Denbigh would have proposed to her had he known of her riches; and I doubt Margaret could not have resisted the temptation of being a Countess more than Lady Holford. She certainly can never have a more disagreeable suitor: and therefore I grow every day more in danger of losing her and all her wealth. Mr. Williams said this morning that Margaret's is the best place in England, and wondered Mr. Gilbert[4] did not insist on knowing what it is worth. Thank my stars, he did not! Colonel Barré or Lord Ashburton would propose to suppress housekeepers and then humbly offer to show my house themselves, and the first would calculate what he had missed by not having shown it for the last ten years, and expect to be indemnified; for virtue knows to a farthing what it has lost by not having been vice. Good night, Madam; my poor rheumatic shoulder must go to bed.

[3] Richard Rigby.

[4] Thomas Gilbert, M.P. for Lichfield, who conducted the inquiry into the value of pensions and patent places.

2431. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 5, 1783.

Do not think, my best Lord, that I forget or neglect the very kind and favourite invitations from Nuneham, but I weigh my own incapacities, and how likely I am to be an encumbrance. The result of my meditations is, that, as I can neither entirely resign my own satisfaction, nor purchase it with clogging you and Lady Harcourt, nor abstain from visiting the additional beauties of Nuneham, before they are *in the sere and yellow leaf*, I have determined to offer myself in the beginning of September. In the morning I can drive out with you; and as the days will then be short, I shall not be the cause of your being in the house, and consequently can enjoy your company without having it on my conscience to have shortened your walks, in which I am not able to join. If this scheme will interfere with none of your Lordship's, you will be so good as to let me know your commands at your leisure.

By your note to Mrs. Clive, I learn that Miss Fauquier is with you, and Mr. Whitehead, and so I hope they will be in September if you admit me. Where Mr. Mason is, I am ignorant, which is pretty much the state of my intelligence about everybody and everything, except my own calamities, which consist in having had a little gout, and in having a little more rheumatism, from having been able to bear not so much clothing as our ancestor's old jacket or fig-leaf in the excessive heat, and from being overrun with all the languages of Babel, who come to see my house from morning to night.

Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me[1].

Letter 2431.—[1] Pope, *Prologue to Satires*, l. 12.

The Duc de Chartres was in my hall before I knew he was to come. Mons. de Guignes and *sa tribu*[2] by candlelight, and the Chev. de Jerningham[3] brought a host of Luxemburgs and Lusignans while I was at dinner, as Mr. Mason may have told you. Madame de Cambis dined with me last week, and who do you think came with her? *Diane de Poitiers* of the next reign[4]. You will guess who I mean when I tell you she was a little embarrassed with sitting over against a picture[5] that cost me more than three hundred *shillings*. Madame de Cambis, who is not yet deep in the Chronique Scandaleuse, telling me what and whom she had already seen, said, and 'J'ai vu le —— de ——[6].' I replied, without looking up, 'Il est fort beau[7].'

But let us change the subject. My niece Maria is extremely recovered, and Lady Chewton perfectly well. She has a fine little girl, and suckles it herself, and not at the commerce table. At Lady Cecilia's[8] last week I saw Mr. and *Mrs.* Majendie[9]. I hope your Lordship will be pleased to hear, if you do not know, that a friend of the husband had the good sense to pass eldest, and attend them to church, and now is reckoned to have made the match. To change the subject again: the Duke and Duchess[10] are gone to Strasbourg, the Margravine being dying.

The Prince of Wales dined lately at Gunnersbury. Before

[2] Hitherto printed as a proper name, 'La Tribu.'

[3] Charles (d. 1814), fourth son of Sir George Jerningham, fifth Baronet; a General in the French service and Knight of Malta and of St. Louis.

[4] Lady Melbourne, at this time greatly admired by the Prince of Wales.

[5] Reynolds's group of the Ladies Waldegrave, which hung in the Refectory at Strawberry Hill. Lady Melbourne caused the rupture of Lady Maria Waldegrave's match with the Earl of Egremont.

[6] 'Le Prince de Galles.'

[7] For observations on this passage, see *Notes and Queries*, Feb. 9, 1901.

[8] Lady Cecilia Johnston.

[9] Captain Lewis Majendie, second son of Dr. John James Majendie, sometime Preceptor to Queen Charlotte, and to the Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick; m. (July 15, 1783) Elizabeth, only daughter of Sir Henry Hoghton, sixth Baronet, of Hoghton Tower.

[10] Of Gloucester.

they rose from table, Lady Clermont said, 'I am sure the Duke of Portland is dying for a pinch of snuff,' and pushed her box to him 'cross the Princess[11], who said to her, 'Pray, Madam, where did you learn that breeding? did the Queen of France teach it to you[12]?' These are the gossiping anecdotes our village affords, but they are better than news of burning towns and sinking ships.

I hope the Isis makes a little water in your Thames; ours, who is an old bachelor, and has no such conveniences, is as dry as a stick. We have no more verdure than there is in the Tuileries;—the evenings are delicious, but the nights are insupportable,—in short, one is never contented. However, one is very happy when one has no more terrible miseries, and one has very little to say when one talks of the weather and princes and princesses. Your Lordship probably thinks that I might have found that out two pages ago. I am to eat your Lordship's health at Clivden, in your own venison, at the end of the week, and to drink Miss *Pope's eye*, who is with them, and comforts them much under poor Mrs. Mestivyer's ramblings. Lady Jerningham is as deplorable; she was here one evening, and insisted that there was a woman in white in one of my trees! Alas! alas! if one does not force oneself to smile like Patience on a monument, one should do nothing but meditate and sigh! I have mementos in every limb and every finger, but one has lived so long as I have with little reflection if one wants to be pulled by one's own sleeve to be put in mind of our nothingness! My letter is just a transcript of my mind, now and then pains, then foolish plagues, spirits, trifles, fooleries, pity and gloom; but it shall wear its holiday clothes at Nuneham, if you let me come thither, as I think you will. Some people invite me and press me,

[11] The Princess Amelia.
[12] Lady Clermont was a favourite with the Queen of France.

and I am haughty, and refuse, but at Nuneham I sue for admittance, and would fly thither if my wings were not pinioned, and the feathers battered and ruffled like those of a Shrove-tide cock.

Adieu, my dear Lord,
Your most devoted,
H. Walpole.

2432. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 15, 1783.

The address from the Volunteers is curious indeed, and upon the first face a little Irish. What! would they throw off our Parliament, and yet amend it? It is like correcting a question in the House of Commons, and then voting against it. But I suppose they rather mean to increase confusion here, that we may not be at leisure to impede their progress; at least this may be the intention of the leaders. Large bodies are only led by being in earnest themselves, when their leaders are not so: but my head is not clear enough to apply it to different matters, nor could I do any good if it were. Our whole system is become a disjointed chaos, and time must digest it, or blow it up shortly. I see no way into it, nor expect anything favourable but from chance, that often stops confusion on a sudden. To restore us by any system, it would require a single head furnished with wisdom, temper, address, fortitude, full and undivided power, and sincere patriotism divested of all personal views. Where is that prodigy to be found? and how should it have the power, if it had all the rest? And if it had the power, how could it be divested of that power again? And if it were not, how long would it retain its virtues? Power and wisdom would soon unite, like Antony and Augustus, to annihilate their colleague virtue,

for being a poor creature like Lepidus. In short, the mass of matter is too big for me: I am going out of the world, and cannot trouble myself about it. I do think of your part in it, and wish to preserve you where you are, for the benefits that you may contribute. I have a high opinion of Mr. Fox, and believe that by frankness you may become real friends, which would be greatly advantageous to the country. There is no competition in my mind where you are concerned: but Fox is the minister with whom I most wish you united,—indeed, to all the rest I am indifferent or adverse: but, besides his superior abilities, he has a liberality of acting that is to my taste; it is like my father's plainness, and has none of the paltry little *finesses* of a statesman.

Your parties do not tempt me, because I am not well enough to join in them: nor yet will they stop me, though I had rather find only you and Lady Aylesbury and Mrs. Damer. I am not seriously ill; nay, am better upon the whole than I was last year: but I perceive decays enough in myself to be sensible that the scale may easily be inclined to the worst side. This observation makes me very indifferent to everything that is not much at my heart. Consequently what concerns you is, as it has always been for above forty years, a principal object. Adieu!

2433. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 27, 1783.

I am sorry to hear, my Lady, that the plague is broke *loose* in Bedfordshire; it has been here, and now rages much. I heard so many histories of it t'other night at Twickenham Park, that recollecting I had eaten a vast deal of fruit, I stopped at the apothecary's as I came home, and made him give me a glass of peppermint-water. I don't

know why I thought my own disorders preferable, or why one more should signify. I have a constant rheumatic fever every night, which ruins my sleep, though almost all I have lived upon for a century; but how can one talk of oneself after you have told me such a tragical story! and when half Italy is smoking in ruins! Even my Lilliputian earthquake was true, for others felt it. I don't know how I missed seeing the meteor and its young ones, for I was sitting over against the window. We were better in our old-fashioned summers when sitting up to our knees in rain.

If your Ladyship makes apologies for writing of weather and epidemic illnesses from Bedfordshire, I ought to make them tenfold from Twickenham, where our old market-women used to have other commodities to traffic with; and yet I know no more than a county club—except that Crawfurd has been robbed in Oxford Road in a hackney-coach at ten at night. He lost twenty guineas and his pocket-book; and as he has always presence of mind enough to be curious, Hare says that he said to the highwayman, 'You must have taken other pocket-books: could not you let me have one instead of mine?'

I believe part of my fever is owing to being disturbed every morning. I do all I can to be forgotten, but my wicked house, like a fine tomb, draws crowds hither, without letting me rest in it. The complexion of my latter days is certainly not of the hue I proposed; it was not in my plan to live with princes and princesses, or to keep an inn. A Prince de Hessenstein has lately been to dine here. My first acquaintance with him was odd; he was then only called Count. The last time but one that I was at Paris, and with Madame du Deffand, they announced, as I thought, Monsieur le Count d'Estaing; I was rejoiced to see a man of whom I had heard so much. A *cordon bleu* entered.

When he was gone I said he was a very different kind of man from what I had expected — 'And what did you expect? and why did you expect anything?' said Madame du Deffand. I explained my reasons; she said this was not Count d'Estaing, but de Hessenstein, a natural son of the old King of Sweden—very well:—two years afterwards the same thing happened, and a different *cordon bleu* entered. Now I thought I was quite sure I had got the true *D'Estaing*; but lo! this second was another son of the same king; and this is he that has been here.

Since my letters are forced to live upon old stories, I will tell you another, Madam, that I had from Mr. Cambridge this morning. A Sir Blundel Carlton, as great a fool as the outset of his Christian name seemed to promise, was addressed for charity by an old woman who had nursed him. He would give her nothing. She urged her care and tenderness, and how well she had brought him up. He fell into a passion, and swore she had been his greatest foe. 'They tell me,' said he, 'that I was the finest child in the world, and that you changed me at nurse.'

I hope Lady Ella Fitzpatrick was a changeling too; I should be mortified to have had any genuine Fitzpatrick escape me, who have the honour of being genealogist to the family, and who have studied the MSS. of O'Bull King-at-Arms to the Milesian monarchs, before they had any arms, or he could write or read. I beg George Selwyn would confine himself to his own province, and concern himself only with those upstarts, the Howards and Douglases, and not meddle with the Fitzpatricks, who are so ancient that the best Irish antiquaries affirm that they reckoned many generations before the first man was created; but I will command my passion, lest I should not have a good night's rest.

2434. To Sir Horace Mann.

Aug. 27, 1783.

It is time to resume my veteran punctuality, and think of writing to you; but alas! correspondence, like matrimonial duty, is but ill performed when only prompted by periodic recollection of a debt to be paid. However, I am so far different from a husband, that my inclination is not decreased: want of matter alone makes me sluggish. The war is at an end, which, like domestic quarrels, animated our intercourse, and, like them, concludes with kissing, and is followed by dullness and inaction. The definitive treaty, they say, is signed; the French and we are exceedingly fond. Presents pass weekly between the Duchesses of Polignac and Devonshire; and so many French arrive, that they overflow even upon me, and visit Strawberry as one of our sights. The Marquise de la Jamaïque, sister of your *Countess of Albany*[1], has been here this month, and stays above another. But, are not such articles below even the ingredients of a letter; especially between you and me, who have dealt in the fates of kingdoms? If I would talk politics, I must have recourse to the long-depending topic, whether there will be a war between the Turks and Russians; of which, in good truth, I know as little as of anything else.

Sir William Hamilton is arrived, but I have not yet seen him. He will not be quite out of his element, for we have had pigmy earthquakes, much havoc by lightning, and some very respectable meteors.

I have not heard a syllable of Sharpe and Lucas. As

Letter 2434.—[1] Wife of the son of the Duke of Berwick and Liria, and daughter of the Prince of Stolberg. Her sister was married to the Pretender, who called himself Prince of Albany, and then resided at Florence. *Walpole.*

it is vacation, I suppose even private justice cannot be administered out of term time. Pray, has Lord Orford ever paid you for his mother's tomb? I promised you to dun him if he did not, therefore empower me if he has neglected it.

I have not wherewithal to compose another paragraph, so this exordium must prove that I have not been negligent; but it must lie in my writing-box till I can collect something to fill up the remainder of the page—if I aimed at a third, I should not perhaps send it away before the Parliament meets.

Sept. 1.

I shall finish this letter, brief as it is; for I go to-morrow to Park Place and Nuneham for ten days. Mr. Fox has notified to the City that the definitive treaties are to be signed the day after to-morrow by all parties but Holland: whether the latter is abandoned and pouts, or is reserved by France as a nest-egg for hatching a new war, I know not. Lord Shelburne, I suppose, will rave against the ministers for having definished his treaties, since he cannot abuse them for not having terminated them; but I trust he will be little heeded.

They say there has been a dreadful hurricane and inundation at Surat. All the elements seem to be willing to make a figure in their turn. In our humble northern way we have had much damage by lightning. The summer has been wonderfully hot, and of late very unhealthy. Our globe really seems to be disordered. I have had my share in a rheumatic fever, which is not gone; but I hope change of air will cure it. In truth, I have no great faith in cures at my age for chronic complaints; but I try remedies, like people who go into lotteries, because they would not be out of fortune's way.

2435. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 30, 1783.

I have been much afraid, my dear Lord, that I should be disappointed at last of the happiness of seeing Nuneham once more. I have been plagued with a rheumatic fever, which I began to think nothing would remove, and which destroyed my sleep and my spirits. It is much lessened within these few days, and as old folks should seize time by the hind lock, leaving the fore one for the young, I am determined to wait on your Lordship on Wednesday or Thursday next, lest I should never have another opportunity, or should wait till I might say with Cardinal Wolsey, 'Father Abbot, I am come to lay my *bones* amongst you.' Indeed, I may always say that with propriety, for I bring nothing else but *bones*, and those aching.

I ought to thank your Lordship for the Catalogue of Nuneham, but how can I thank you for what makes me blush? You have been pleased to record the silver pennies that I have presumed to offer at your shrine, you that have loaded me with ingots! Fie on you!

Sir Edward[1] says I shall be mighty happy with meeting my Lord of Oxford[2], 'who is often at Nuneham, for Lord Harcourt is very good to him.' I smiled, and fear it was the only mark of joy I could bring myself to hang out.

Another of my *loyal* blood, who is with me, is to have Governor Johnstone and his wife to-morrow, to show my house to them. I said, '*You* may show it to them, to be sure, if you please, but I promise you *I* will not; *I* will not see Governor Johnstone.'

A *friend*[3] of the Governor and the Bishop (though I

Letter 2435.—[1] Sir Edward Walpole.
[2] John Butler, Bishop of Oxford. Hitherto printed 'Orford.' (See *Notes and Queries*, Jan. 21, 1899.)
[3] The King.

think one does not hear so much of the —— friends [4] lately), on a debate some days ago, whether convicts could not again be sent to Virginia, said, 'Oh, I should like that; it is all the commerce I desire to have with America.' No doubt; *commerce* with America was a terrible load, but we have happily got rid of it! I need not sign my name; I believe your Lordship would guess the writer by any paragraph in this letter.

2435*. To Lord Dacre.

My dear Lord, Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1783.

How very kind you always are to me! I have now to thank your Lordship for the print of Copthall, as well as for the list of Scotch painters, which I return with gratitude. I shall add them to my own Catalogue, but I shall certainly not think of another edition; there have surely been enough printed. I do lament that your Lordship had so much trouble in getting the paper—but there is no end of my obligations. Your Lordship's and Lady Dacre's goodness to me at Belhouse [1] I can never forget, nor cease to be her Ladyship's and your Lordship's

Most devoted
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

2436. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1783.

I doubt my answers to your Ladyship's questions will be a little stale as well as unsatisfactory, for I have been absent

[4] 'The King's friends,' as a political faction.

Letter 2435*.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. W. V. Daniell, Mortimer Street, W.

[1] Lord Dacre's seat in Essex.

eight days, in order to try change of air for my nightly fever. I began to fancy that Strawberry did not agree with me, and went to Park Place, but to no purpose; but to convince myself that if Twickenham does not suit me, no other *country* air is better, the only two good nights I have had these six weeks being two I passed in London. Nor is this the first experience I have had of the kind, as I never am out of order but I mend much sooner in town than anywhere else—no very grateful discovery, after having meant this place for my latter days, and trimmed it accordingly.

Be assured, Madam, that the story of the pocket-book was Mr. Hare's—at least not mine. He has a great deal too much wit for me to presume to deck myself in his plumes, I who am a jackdaw to him. Lady Di told me the story. Of Sir Blundel I reported all I knew, and my author too. I almost wish you had not paid me with the catastrophe of Mrs. Hesse's family. I have lately heard but too many tragedies. Sir William Hamilton was at Park Place, and gave us the full details of the Calabrian devastation, and more than he chose to insert in his book: of which one dreadful instance shall suffice:—Many crushed wretches perished, because the priests insisted on having the rubbish of churches removed first to deliver the consecrated wafers, who, they ought to have supposed, were capable of helping themselves.

I must be negative too, Madam, to all your other queries. I was not well enough to go to Lady Chewton's christening. I have not seen the Princess since her nephew dined with her, though like you I have heard how great a favourite he is. I know nothing of Mrs. Johnson's letter, nor of the mock royalty at Hatfield, but what you are so good as to tell me. George Lord Bristol used to play at Drawing-rooms in the same manner at Ickworth[1], and ask if the

LETTER 2436.—[1] The family seat near Bury St. Edmunds.

parsons and neighbours loved walking or riding. I do not wonder that people are servile courtiers, when they delight in aping the insipidity of levees themselves. One must reverence an *ignis fatuus*, if one should be glad to be a glow-worm oneself.

There is little good that is new in Atterbury's pieces[2], Madam, as you have found yourself by this time. Blair's criticisms I have not seen; Beattie's nauseated me. Of the Dauphin's Life I have not heard. Of the lives of abortive kings I had a surfeit, too, in Birch's Life of Prince Henry. A Black Prince happens but once in a millennium.

As, at Park Place, I was within eighteen miles, I made a visit to Lord and Lady Harcourt, and was much pleased with poor Brown's alteration of the house and improvements of the place, as much as I could see of them, for there was such a tempest during the two days and a half that I was there, that I could stir out of the house but for one hour; but I went to my passion, Oxford, and saw Sir Joshua's 'Nativity.' But, alas! it is just the reverse of the glorious appearance it made in the dark chamber in Pall Mall. It is too high, the ante-chapel where it is placed is too narrow to see it but fore-shortened, and the washy Virtues round it are so faint and light, that the dark shepherds and *chiaroscuro*, that are meant to relieve the glory, Child, and angels, obscure the whole. I foresaw long ago, that Jarvis's colours, being many of them not transparent, could not have the effect of old painted glass. Indeed, to see his window tolerably, I was forced to climb into the organ-loft, by such a pair of stairs, that, not having broken my neck, I can almost believe that I could dance a minuet on a horse galloping full speed, like young

[2] The *Epistolary Correspondence*, &c., of Bishop Atterbury, published this year.

Astley,—for I have seen young Astley, when I was in town last, and henceforth shall believe that nothing is impossible, nay, shall wonder if flying is not brought to perfection, and if Bishop Wilkins does not prove as great a prophet of arts as Sir Francis Bacon. How awkward will a dancer be, for the future, that has not consummate grace on a plain firm floor! But, though Mercury did not tread the air with more sovereign agility than the son, it was the father I contemplated with most admiration! What a being, who dared to conceive that he could make horses dance, and any horse dance, and that men, women, and children might be trained to possess themselves on, over, round the rapidity of two, three, four race-horses, and neither tremble for their necks, nor forget one attitude that is becoming! When he can collect whole troops of such agents, form and command them, I look on him with the reverence that I should have for the legislator of society in its infancy, for a Mango Capac or a Zoroaster. Dr. Franklin and Marshal Washington will sink in my esteem, if the Congress and the colonies are not rendered as docile as Astley's Houyhnhnms. A master genius I see can do anything. Impossibilities are difficulties only to those who want parts.

2437. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 10[1].

Mr. Morice has written to me from Lausanne, which he was to leave at the beginning of this month for Naples, desiring to find a letter from me at Florence, with a state of the affair of Cav. Mozzi. I fear this will arrive too late. Should he be gone, you will be so good as to convey

Letter 2437. — [1] This was only a note in the cover of a letter to be transmitted to Mr. Morice. *Walpole.*

it to him wherever he is, or keep it for him should he not be arrived.

I do not know a tittle of news, but that the Peace arrived signed last Saturday. I have just seen Sir William Hamilton at General Conway's, and heard with great pleasure a most satisfactory account of you and your good looks and health. It is midnight, and this must go to town early to-morrow morning; and I am tired with writing to Mr. Morice, for I have the rheumatism in my right arm.

2438. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 12, 1783.

Your Lordship tells me you hope my summer has glided pleasantly, like our Thames. I cannot say it has passed very pleasantly to me, though, like the Thames, dry and low; for somehow or other I caught a rheumatic fever in the great heats, and cannot get rid of it. I have just been at Park Place and Nuneham, in hopes change of air would cure me; but to no purpose. Indeed, as want of sleep is my chief complaint, I doubt I must make use of a very different and more disagreeable remedy, the air of London, the only place that I ever find agree with me when I am out of order. I was there for two nights a fortnight ago, and slept perfectly well. In vain has my predilection for Strawberry made me try to persuade myself that this was all fancy; but, I fear, reasons that appear strong, though contrary to our inclinations, must be good ones. London at this time of year is as nauseous a drug as any in an apothecary's shop. I could find nothing at all to do, and so went to Astley's, which indeed was much beyond my expectation. I do not wonder any longer that Darius was chosen king by the instructions he gave to his horse; nor that Caligula made his consul. Astley can

make his dance minuets and hornpipes; which is more extraordinary than to make them vote at an election, or act the part of a magistrate, which animals of less capacities can perform as dexterously as a returning officer or a Master in Chancery.—But I shall not have even Astley now: her Majesty the Queen of France, who has as much taste as Caligula, has sent for the whole *dramatis personae* to Paris. Sir William Hamilton was at Park Place, and gave us dreadful accounts of Calabria: he looks much older, and has the bronze of a patina.

At Nuneham I was much pleased with the improvements both within doors and without. Mr. Mason was there; and, as he shines in every art, was assisting Mrs. Harcourt with his new discoveries in painting, by which he will unite miniature and oil. Indeed, she is a very apt and extraordinary scholar. Since our professors seem to have lost the art of colouring, I am glad at least that they have ungraduated accessors.

We have plenty and peace at last; consequently leisure for repairing some of our losses, if we have sense enough to set about the task. On what will happen I shall make no conjectures, as it is not likely I should see much of what is to come. Our enemies have humbled us enough to content them; and we have succeeded so ill in innovations, that surely we shall not tempt new storms in haste.

From this place I can send your Lordship nothing new or entertaining; nor expect more game in town, whither nothing but search of health should carry me. Perhaps it is a vain chase at my age; but at my age one cannot trust to nature's operating cures without aiding her; it is always time enough to abandon oneself when no care will palliate our decays. I hope your Lordship and Lady Strafford will long be in no want of such attentions; nor

should I have talked so much of my own cracks, had I had anything else to tell you. It would be silly to aim at vivacity when it is gone: and, though a lively old man is sometimes an agreeable being, a pretending old man is ridiculous. Aches and an apothecary cannot give one genuine spirits; 'tis sufficient if they do not make one peevish. Your Lordship is so kind as to accept of me as I am, and you shall find nothing more counterfeit in me than the sincere respect and gratitude with which I have the honour to be your Lordship's most devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2439. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1783.

You desired me to write to you if I heard any news, but though a letter appears, do not expect any novelty. I have not seen the shadow of a politician since my return, nor scarce anything but rain, and my apothecary; and yet if the former has maintained my rheumatism, the latter has cured my nightly fever by the bark, on which I determined instead of James's powder, lest the latter should only make an exchange for the gout. The bark the very first night was as efficient as opium, and I now sleep almost as well as ever, which is like a dormouse.

I do not write to notify this important detail, though it is the total of my history; no, but I want to know how your pupil Mrs. Harcourt advances by your marriage of oil and water colours. Next, if it answers, I should be glad to have the receipt, that is, if you have no objection, and do not intend to keep your nostrum a secret till you can announce the discovery to your own honour—not that I will rob you of it—I have two purposes to serve, one to com-

municate the process to Lady Di, the other to employ a painter to oil some of her drawings, if your method will do for that end, and will not hurt them; but I repeat that I do not desire you to acquaint me with the process if you have the least objection.

I do not know whether my nieces are yet arrived at Nuneham; in short, I am *d'une ignorance crasse!* and have been trifling entirely at home alone. I have given my Grammont to Dodsley to be reprinted, which you will say is not much employment. Oh, but it is, and a disagreeable one too, for I correct the proof-sheets, the most tiresome occupation either as editor or printer. Pray whisper to Lady Harcourt that she has not given me enough to occupy me in either capacity for a week, and that I beg she will bring me more to town before I begin.

I repeat a prayer of the same kind to you. First, as you are a poet, I must print something of yours; next, as you are a painter, I was so pleased with your altar-piece that I long to have a bit by your hand; why should you not execute a small piece, at least, with your discovery? I should like it soon—if you ever did do anything soon—that I may insert it in the description of my collection which I am finishing, and for which all the plates are ready. Paint me any little scene out of your own *Garden*[1]. I wish I was worthy to ask for any piece of music composed by yourself for your other discovered marriage, the celestinette. However, as I do not want an ear so much but that I can celebrate a performer, I send you the following epitaph, which I wrote three or four years ago, and found t'other day amongst some old papers. It was written at Lady Ossory's desire on her losing a favourite piping bullfinch, which was buried under a rose-tree at Ampthill. The lines

LETTER 2489. — [1] Probably an allusion to Mason's poem, *The English Garden*.

I think you never saw, and it is a great presumption to send poetry from the sexton of Parnassus to the high-priest; it is folly too to send such poetry from *Twitnam*, but it is your fault, not mine, if you carried off all Mr. Pope's inheritance, and left me as poor a bard as the bellman, *que voici.*

All flesh is grass, and so are feathers too:
Finches must die, as well as I or you.
Beneath a damask rose in good old age,
Here lies the tenant of a noble cage:
For forty moons he charm'd his lady's ear,
And piped obedient oft as she drew near,
Though now stretch'd out upon a clay-cold bier.
But when the last shrill flageolet shall sound,
And raise all dicky-birds from holy ground,
This little corpse again its wings shall prune,
And sing eternally the self-same tune,
From everlasting night to everlasting noon.

When I send you these lines to prove that I do not totally want an ear, I put myself in mind of a story of Mr. Raftor, who, visiting a lady who never stirs out of London, and asking her if she never went into the country, she replied, 'No; but I have lately got something *rural*, I have bought a cuckoo-clock.'

2440. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1783.

The last I heard of the plan of their Highnesses of Gloucester was, that they intended to winter in Provence: if they have changed their purpose, it is more than I know. The Churchills were delighted with Nancy; but then, I think, King Stanislas was living; now, I conclude, both Nancy and Luneville are fallen into the state of other little capitals that have become appendices to greater, are grown

poorer, and keep up a melancholy kind of pride in lamenting the better days they remember. But, Madam, why are you inquisitive about Nancy? I fear you cast a look that way! I shall be very sorry! It is the sad lot of long life to outlive one's friends: but must I part with them before I go? Well, the less one has to regret, perhaps the easier is the passage; indeed, *my* pleasures are already not too ecstatic.

The bark, as your Ladyship says happened in your neighbourhood, did cure my fever, indeed like a spell; I took a dose but two hours before I went to bed, and yet slept all night. I cannot say my rheumatism is as tractable; it maintains its post like General Elliot, and I suppose will not remove till superseded by Governor Gout.

I never saw Apethorpe[1], Madam, nor is your account inviting. Old mansions papered and laid open are like modern ancient ladies in *polonoises* and with bare necks; they are neither respectable nor comfortable, but make one wish them demolished and changed for younger structures. The *façade* of Peterborough is noble, and in great taste; I have seen it twice.

I did not know who were the competitors for the vice-embassy: the papers named Mr. Storer. Mr. Gibbon, I heard, was going abroad for three years; but, as you see, Madam, I can only answer your questions by pleading ignorance, I should not be less informed if I lived in Siberia; nay, *there* new exiles would, at least, tell me what had passed since *my* time; but the strangers that visit my dwelling I do not even exchange a word with; and whatever the papers tell me rather creates in me disbelief. I remember how false they were when I lived in the world, and I have not yet fallen into that common practice of the ancient, to believe them only because I know nothing more true.

LETTER 2440.—[1] The seat of the Earl of Westmorland in Northamptonshire.

Indifference and content I believe are, as well as age, the causes of my want of curiosity. I like the present administration, and would not have it changed; but the humiliated state of this country makes me rather avoid all thoughts of politics. My English or selfish pride is mortified at seeing the decadence of our empire. While I was angry at the authors, resentment served for spirits—now I am numbed and careless.

Others, I find, have not contracted my torpor, nor is it natural that the young should. They seem as eager for honours as when we were at our meridian; but I could not help smiling at the King's showering Irish peerages. Is not it a little like the old Pretender comforting himself for the loss of a crown by bestowing pinchbeck coronets? I wish some of the engineers of the American war were to be created dukes of New England, and earls of Boston and Charleston; and that since they have been so unlike the Romans, who acquired the titles of Africani for conquering hostile countries, our Machiavels were to be denominated from the provinces that they have lost.

Have you seen Lord Aldborough's foolish and contemptible pamphlet, Madam? As his wife could not persuade me to print her father's works, and, though no peer, enrol him amongst the noble authors, I suppose she determined her lord should be one in spite of my teeth, and in spite of nature's too. She is welcome, for I am out of the scrape; I keep no register of living scribblers. The sextons of next age may bury the dead of this.

2441. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1783.

Though I enclosed a letter to you for Mr. Morice about three weeks ago, I cannot pretend to have written to you

since the 1st of September. The cause of my silence lasts still,—a total want of matter; and though my punctual conscience enjoins me to begin a letter to you, it will have a hard task to make me finish it. The Peace has closed the chapter of important news, which was all our correspondence lived on. My age makes me almost as ignorant of common occurrences as your endless absence has made you. I cannot concern myself in what people, who might be my grandchildren, do. The fatal American war has so lowered my country, that I wish to think of it as little as I do of the youth of the times. My common sense tells me that I cannot belong to a new age; and my memory, that I did belong to a better than the present. Thus I interest myself in nothing; and whoever is indifferent, is ill qualified for a correspondent. You must make allowance for my present insipidity, in consideration of my past service. I have been your faithful intelligencer for two-and-forty years. I do not take my leave; but, in a dearth of events such as you would wish to know, do not wonder if my letters are less frequent. It would be tiresome to both to repeat that I have nothing to say. Would you give a straw to have me copy the *Gazette*, which you see as well as I, only to tell you there are nine new Irish lords and ladies, of whom I never saw the persons of three?

I have complained to Mr. Duane of the indecent inaction of Sharpe and Lucas: he thinks it as extraordinary as I do, and has promised to reprove them.

Not being worth another paragraph in the world, I shall postpone my letter till next week, and carry it with me to town on Monday. Not that I expect to learn anything there or then. London is a desert the moment the shooting season begins, and continues so to the middle of November at least. In my younger days I have been very barren in autumn in time of peace.

Monday, 30th.

I have lately been putting together into a large volume a collection of portrait-prints of all the persons mentioned in the Letters of Madame de Sévigné; of whom for many years I have been amassing engravings, and of whom I have got a great number. I wish, therefore, you would send me a single print, if you can procure a separate one, of the Great Duchess, wife of Cosmo the Third, and daughter of Gaston Duke of Orleans, that absurd woman, of whom so much is said in the new History of the Medici. I have her amongst the other heads of the Medici, but do not care to mangle the set. You probably can obtain one from the engraver; but do not give yourself any trouble, nor pay a straw more than it is worth. If you obtain one, send it by any traveller coming to England. I trust you will have no occasion to send a courier. Let us rejoice, my dear Sir, that you have no such occasion, and that I have so little to say. I hope we shall neither blunder into new matter, nor that our foregoing errors may be attended by new events. Never was my father's *quieta non movere* established into a maxim that ought to be a lesson to politicians, so much as by the American war. It has *already* cost us our colonies and doubled our debt.

Learning nothing in town, I send this away to prove to you that I have no disposition to relax our correspondence; but, as it is foolish to give only negative proofs, be assured, if my intervals are longer, that, like a good husband long married, my constancy is not impaired, though I may not be so regular in my demonstrations as formerly.

P.S. I have heard nothing of the *Fatti Farnesiani.*

2442. To Miss Mary Hamilton[1].

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1783.

I have just received, Madam, the very obliging favour of your letter, and the two melancholy narratives, and do not let pass a moment without thanking you. Surely, Madam, you had no cause for making an apology. I ought to make one to you for the trouble I have occasioned to you, if your excellent and compassionate heart could think it a trouble to serve the unfortunate, or to oblige those who respect you.

Two passages in your letter struck me, Madam, and I fear will create a little more exertion of your obliging disposition. You say the poor Louisa[2] is confined, from necessity, to a cell—if by *necessity* is meant the want of money, I will most gladly contribute towards removing that necessity; but as she found so much humanity I rather imagine that the deplorable state of her mind necessarily occasions her confinement to a cell destined to lunatics—but if the former sense is implied, I beg to know it, and how I may most speedily relieve her.

The other passage, Madam, is: 'What satisfaction, Sir, will it afford you, if through your means she is at length restored to her relations and friends?' Satisfaction it would be a high one indeed—but ah, Madam, by what means can that felicity fall to *my* lot! If you can point out any method

Letter 2442.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Correspondence of Mrs. Delany*, vol. vi. pp. 145–7.

[1] Mary, daughter of Charles, eldest son of Lord Archibald Hamilton, son of third Duke of Hamilton; m. (1785) John Dickenson, of Toxall. Miss Hamilton was at this time Assistant Sub-Governess to the young Princesses.

[2] An unfortunate lunatic, found under a haystack near Bristol. Except her Christian name, Louisa, she could give no account of herself. She was, however, evidently a German. Through the exertions of Hannah More (who was a friend of Miss Hamilton) and other benevolent persons, she was placed in a private asylum at Hanham, near Bristol. John Wesley, who was acquainted with the owner of the asylum, twice mentions her in his *Journals* (March 25, 1782; March 6, 1784).

I would joyfully pursue it—though I doubt your tenderness would have suggested that method if you had conceived it. One question I will take the liberty to ask you, as by contracting the sphere of inquiry one might be led nearer to a discovery. Has Louisa dropped any hint whether she is a Catholic, a Lutheran, or a Calvinist? Germany is so wide a field that without some clue it would be a wild search, especially for me who have not a correspondent in all Germany to commence the pursuit. I am not acquainted with the Christian minister, but know a person not yet in town who could apply to him; and I could as indirectly get queries proposed to other foreign ministers, and to some of our own in Germany, or have advertisements conveyed to them. In short, Madam, I would do anything in my power, not only from the duty of humanity, and to please you and Miss More, who have shown such engaging benevolence, but from having too intimate acquaintance with the misfortune of lunacy, having (besides an instance I will not mention) two families dependent on myself afflicted with that calamity, which I know, alas! is almost hopeless. For poor Louisa, dreadful as her case is to those who attend to it, she perhaps is no longer sensible to her misery. For her parents if still living, they, if they can be discovered, may but have an affliction, probably skinned over by time, opened again, not comforted by finding their child in so wretched a state—that however is not a reason for relaxing inquiry. We are not to set up an hypothesis of our own imagination, and shun investigation when positive good may be done, and activity, not speculation and refinement, is demanded of us! We are too apt to numb that activity, and indulge our own laziness and want of feeling by spurious arguments which *we call 'common sense.'* They may be common sense, but if it ever is justifiable to good sense to act romantically, it is by being the knights-errant to the

distressed. Louisa shall be my Dulcinea, Madam, and you shall be *the Duchess* who countenances me, and will not, like that insolent great woman, make sport with the visionary whom she encourages to expose himself,—a character I think it very immoral in Cervantes to have exhibited. There was no occasion to teach wealth and grandeur to laugh at misfortunes, which they ought to pity.

I have the honour to be, with the truest regard,
Madam, your much obliged and most
Obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2443. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 9, 1783.

MADAM my Lady, you have set me a task that poses me, and I must go and rub up my memory. No wonder I did not speak of the *Walpoliana*—why, it is two or three years since it was printed, and I had quite forgot it. I saw it on a person's table, and was interrupted before I had finished the last two pages; I found it such a flimsy thing, that I never inquired after it more. I can now not recollect enough to give you much account of it. All I do recollect is, that I thought it like all the other water-gruel that Lord Hardwicke has published, only with this merit, that the former insipid messes were doled about in leaden kettles, and this is contained in a pewter firkin. It is told with the gossiping importance of an old story-teller, who loves to repeat what he has seen or heard, without judging whether his anecdotes are worth hearing. The only passage of consequence that I remember is the manner of my father's getting the better of Lord Wilmington[1] at the late King's

LETTER 2443.—[1] Then Sir Spencer Compton, and Speaker of the House of Commons. Sir Robert Walpole (then Prime Minister) brought the

accession; and that is represented with the utmost ignorance of all the circumstances that made it curious.

If it was Lord Grantham that wanted to know my opinion, pray don't tell him how poor a dab I think it, for I like Lord Grantham, and do not want to acquaint him that I think, as he must do in his heart, that his papa[2] is an old goody, and never was any better—which he may not suppose; besides, the thing is a very harmless thing, and would really be very well for any old servant of my father to have written, who was proud of boasting of what his master had said to him or before him.

I rejoice to hear that your Ladyship's *équipée* to Nancy is not determined; however, I will not lose my *De Tristibus* that I had prepared on the occasion. I remember a Mr. Seward (father of the present muse of Lichfield[3]), who was travelling governor to Lord Charles Fitzroy[4], who, falling dangerously ill at Genoa, and being saved, as Mentor thought, by Dr. Shadwell, the governor whipped up to his chamber and began a complimentary ode to his physician; but was called down

news of the death of George I to his son and successor. 'The next step was to ask who his Majesty would please should draw his speech to the Council. "Sir Spencer Compton," replied the new monarch. The answer was decisive, and implied Sir Robert's dismission. Sir Spencer Compton . . . was a worthy man, of exceedingly grave formality, but of no parts, as his conduct immediately proved. The poor gentleman was so little qualified to accommodate himself to the grandeur of the moment, and to conceive how a new sovereign should address himself to his ministers, and he had also been so far from meditating to supplant the Premier, that, in his distress, it was to Sir Robert himself that he had recourse, and whom he besought to make the draft of the King's speech for him. The new Queen, a better judge than her husband of the capacities of the two candidates, and who had silently watched for a moment proper for overturning the new designations, did not lose a moment in observing to the King how prejudicial it would be to his affairs to prefer to the minister in possession a man in whose own judgement his predecessor was the fittest person to execute his office. From that moment there was no more question of Sir Spencer Compton as Prime Minister.' (Horace Walpole's *Reminiscences of the Courts of George I and II*, ch. v.)

[2] Lord Hardwicke was Lord Grantham's father-in-law.

[3] Anna Seward (1747–1809), the poetess.

[4] Third son of second Duke of Grafton; d. 1789.

before it was finished, on his pupil's relapse, who did die; however, the bard was too much pleased with the *début* of his poem to throw it away, and so finished it, though his gratitude had been still-born.

My lamentation is no ode; and though I hope its foundation will be still-born too, yet being perfected before I knew so much, you shall have it, as I believe it much superior to Mr. Seward's pindaric. Mine is *Des Couplets*, in imitation of Monsieur de Coulanges, who had a marvellous facility of writing foolish songs and epigrams on any or no occasion, and I flatter myself that I have caught his manner very happily:—

I.

I love and hate Nancy,
Because my dear Nancy
Has taken a fancy
To leave me for Nancy.

II.

Mais puisque il est ainsi,
Je n'aimerai Nancy,
Que quand ma chère Nancy
Reviendra de Nancy.

III.

Till then I'll sob and sigh;
Unless that perchance I
Should find a new Nancy,
And then I will fancy,
That in hers I'm more dear than I was in my Ann's eye.

My dear old Frenchwoman would have asked me to what tune it was set, and would have insisted on my singing it. I should have told her to 'Colin's Complaint,' or 'All in the Downs'; and that though I could not sing, Mr. Crawfurd could, and then she would be charmed with it. If your

Ladyship is not, I will make you amends by a story, with which I defy you not to be delighted.

At the neighbouring village of Teddington lives a Captain Prescott, who is not only a tar, but pitch and brimstone too. Two or three years ago (he is near fifty) he married a beautiful, sensible young woman, daughter of the minister of Portsmouth, who gave her 2,500*l.* Trinculo soon used her inhumanly, beat her, had a child by her, thrashed her again: she was again three months gone with child, and then he beat her so unmercifully, that a young footman who had lived five years with him, could not bear to be witness to so much brutality, left him, and has since lived a year with Mrs. Clive, who finds him the best servant she ever had. Poor Mrs. Trinculo's sufferings continuing, she resolved to run away, and by the footman's assistance did, and got to London. Her father and friends came up, and made her swear the peace against her husband. The cause was heard before Lord Mansfield. Mrs. Clive's servant was summoned as a witness. The Chief Justice asked him if he had not been aiding and abetting to his former mistress's escape. He said, Yes, he had. 'You had!' said my Lord, 'what, do you confess that you helped your master's wife to elope?' 'Yes, my Lord,' replied the lad, 'and yet my master has never thanked me!' 'Thanked you!' said Lord Mansfield, 'thanked you! what, for being an accomplice with a wife against her husband?' 'My Lord,' said the lad, 'if I had not, he would have murdered her, and then he would have been hanged.' The court laughed, Lord Mansfield was charmed with the lad's coolness and wit, and if your Ladyship is not, I hope you will never hear anything better than M. de Coulanges's poetry.

P.S. I never saw the present Duc de Bouillon[5]: I knew

[5] Godefroi Charles Henri, Duc de Bouillon (d. 1792).

his wife, then Princesse de Turenne, a grave, sensible woman, who I believe is dead. I am glad when any French arrive and expose themselves here, that we may have something to set against all the articles that they can produce against our fools.

2444. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1783.

My rheumatism, I thank your Lordship, is certainly better, though not quite gone. It was very troublesome at night till I took the bark: but that medicine makes me sleep like opium. But I will say no more about it, nothing is so troublesome as to talk of chronical complaints: has one any right to draw on the compassion of others, when one must renew the address daily and for months?

The aspect of Ireland is very tempestuous. I doubt they will hurt us materially without benefiting themselves. If they obtain very short Parliaments, they will hurt themselves more than us, by introducing a confusion that will prevent their improvements. Whatever country does adopt short Parliaments will, I am entirely persuaded, be forced to recur to their former practice; I mean, if the disorders introduced do not produce despotism of some sort or other. I am very sorry Mr. Mason concurs in trying to revive the associations. Methinks our state is so deplorable, that every healing measure ought to be attempted instead of innovations. For my own part, I expect nothing but distractions, and am not concerned to be so old. I *am* so old that, were I disposed to novelties, I should think they little became my age. I should be ashamed, when my hour shall come, to be caught in a riot of country squires and parsons, and haranguing a mob with a shaking head. A leader of faction ought to be young and vigorous. If an aged

gentleman does get an ascendant, he may be sure that younger men are counting on his exit, and only flatter him to succeed to his influence, while they are laughing at his misplaced activity. At least, these would be my thoughts, who of all things dread being a jest to the juvenile, if they find me out of my sphere.

I have seen Lord Carlisle's play, and it has a great deal of merit—perhaps more than your Lordship would expect. The language and images are the best part, after the two principal scenes, which are really fine.

I did, as your Ladyship knows and says, always like and esteem Lady Fitzwilliam. I scarce know my Lord; but, from what I have heard of him in the House of Lords, have conceived a good opinion of his sense: of his character, I never heard any ill; which is a great testimonial in his favour, when there are so many horrid characters, and when all that are conspicuous have their minutest actions tortured to depose against them.

You may be sure, my dear Lord, that I heartily pity Lady Strafford's and your loss of four-legged friends. Sense and fidelity are wonderful recommendations; and when one meets with them, and can be confident that one is not imposed upon, I cannot think that the two additional legs are any drawback. At least I know that I have had friends who would never have vexed or betrayed me, if they had walked on all fours.

I have no news to send your Lordship; indeed, I inquire for none, nor wish to hear any. Whence is any good to come? I am every day surprised at hearing people eager for news. If there is any, they are sure of hearing it. How can one be curious to know one does not know what; and perpetually curious to know? Has one nothing to do but to hear and relate something new?—And why can one care about nothing but what one does not know? And why is

every event worth hearing, only because one has not heard it? Have not there been changes enough? divorces enough? bankruptcies and robberies enough? and, above all, lies enough?—No; or people would not be every day impatient for the newspaper. I own, I am glad on Sunday when there is no paper, and no fresh lies circulating. Adieu, my good Lord and Lady! May you long enjoy your tranquillity, undisturbed by villainy, folly, and madness!

Your most faithful servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2445. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 18, 1783.

I never think myself in the wrong in writing nonsense. Sense seldom turns to any account, especially to a writer. Your Ladyship strengthens me in my opinion. I sent you some exceedingly foolish rhymes, and they produced very pretty ones in return, and full of meaning. Do you think I will not adhere to my tenet? I only write this to thank you, not to *agacer* you again. I have nothing to say; and our correspondence shall lie dormant, if you please, till I have something to tell you that you might not hear otherwise. I will answer your question on omens, and bid you good night.

Omens I do not pretend to explain, and for this very good reason, that I cannot expound that which you have sent me. If they have any mean*ing*, they must have had a mean*er*; now, if the meaner does not speak to be understood, I take him to be a very silly agent, and I conclude so the more, because the silliest persons are those who guess his meaning; as Charles II said of a fool, who was a popular preacher in his own parish, 'I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense.' But, though I cannot guess the meaning of

a thing without meaning, I can easily tell how Lady Grantham would interpret the omen, for a silly ugly prude must know what she would do, if she were her grandmother's picture, and could do the only thing that can be in a picture's power, tumble down, when your Ladyship was present. I have a female relation, who is a mighty dealer in those winks which she thinks Providence tips her upon every occasion; and, though they never come to pass, she does not suspect that Providence is making a fool of her —or rather made her so once for all. I wonder I am not a greater adept at interpretation, as she has told me what everything in the world *signifies*, except itself, for expounders of prophecies never allow a prognostication to have any first meaning, though always a second.

I came to town on Wednesday to get rid of a rheumatic fever, which had returned with more violence—and I have found the nostrum succeed. It is most unfortunate for me, but I am convinced that country air is too sharp or too damp for me. If I am in the least out of order, I cannot recover but in London. It is, at this moment, a most unpalatable medicine; I have nowhere to go, and have sat almost alone for the whole four days. I shall return to Strawberry on Monday, and then settle here at the very beginning of next month. Mr. Selwyn comes on Tuesday.

P.S. I direct this to Ampthill, as I conclude, if you are not there, it is less likely to miscarry, than if it went to Farming Woods, and should not find you there.

2446. To Lady Browne.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 19, 1783.

As it is not fit my better half should be ignorant of the state of her worse half, lest the gossips of the neighbourhood

should suspect we are parted; let them know, my life, that I am much better to-day. I have had a good deal of fever, and a bad night on Wednesday; but the last was much better, and the fever is much diminished to-day. In short, I have so great an opinion of town-dried air, that I expect to be well enough to return to Twickenham on Monday; and, if I do, will call on you that evening; though I have not been out of my house yet. Indeed, it is unfortunate that so happy a couple, who have never exchanged a cross word, and who might claim the flitch of bacon, cannot be well—the one in town, the other in the country.

2447. To Governor Pownall.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1783.

I am extremely obliged to you, Sir, for the valuable communication[1] made to me. It is extremely so to me, as it does justice to a memory I revere to the highest degree; and I flatter myself that it would be acceptable to that part of the world that loves truth; and that part will be the majority, as fast as *they* pass away who have an interest in preferring falsehood. Happily, truth is longer lived than the passions of individuals; and, when mankind are not misled, they can distinguish white from black. I myself do not pretend to be unprejudiced; I must be so to the best of fathers: I should be ashamed to be quite impartial. No wonder then, Sir, if I am greatly pleased with so able a justification; yet I am not so blinded, but that I can discern solid reasons for admiring your defence. You have placed that defence on sound and *new* grounds; and, though very briefly, have very learnedly stated and distinguished the landmarks of our constitution, and the encroachments made

Letter 2447.—[1] A pamphlet *On the Character and Privileges of Sir Robert Walpole*, afterwards embodied in Coxe's *Life* of that minister.

on it, by justly referring the principles of liberty to the Saxon system, and by imputing the corruptions of it to the Norman. This was a great deal too deep for that superficial mountebank, Hume, to go; for a mountebank he was. He mounted a system in the garb of a philosophic empiric, but dispensed no drugs but what he was authorized to vend by a royal patent, and which were full of Turkish opium. He had studied nothing relative to the English constitution before Queen Elizabeth, and had selected her most arbitrary acts to countenance those of the Stuarts: and even hers he misrepresented; for her worst deeds were levelled against the nobility, those of the Stuarts against the people. Hers, consequently, were rather an obligation to the people; for the most heinous part of despotism is, that it produces a thousand despots instead of one. Muley Moloch cannot lop off many heads with his own hands; at least, he takes those in his way, those of his courtiers: but his bashaws and viceroys spread destruction everywhere. The flimsy, ignorant, blundering manner in which Hume executed the reigns preceding Henry VII, is a proof how little he had examined the history of our constitution.

I could say much, much more, Sir, in commendation of your work, were I not apprehensive of being biased by the subject. Still, that it would not be from flattery, I will prove, by taking the liberty of making two objections; and they are only to the last page but one. Perhaps you will think that my first objection does show that I am too much biased. I own I am sorry to see my father compared to Sylla. The latter was a sanguinary usurper, a monster; the former the mildest, most forgiving, best-natured of men, and a *legal* minister. Nor, I fear, will the only light in which you compare them stand the test. Sylla resigned his power voluntarily, insolently; perhaps timidly, as he might think he had a better chance of dying in his bed, if he retreated,

than by continuing to rule by force. My father did not retire by his own option. He had lost the majority of the House of Commons. Sylla, you say, Sir, retired unimpeached; it is true, but covered with blood. My father was not *impeached*, in our strict sense of the word; but, to my great joy, he was in effect. A Secret Committee, a worse inquisition than a jury, was named; not to try him, but to sift his life for crimes: and out of such a jury, chosen in the dark, and not one of whom he might challenge, he had some determined enemies, many opponents, and but two he could suppose his friends. And what was the consequence? A man charged with every state crime almost, for twenty years, was proved to have done—what? Paid some writers much more than they deserved, for having defended him against ten thousand and ten thousand libels (some of which had been written by his inquisitors), all which libels were confessed to have been lies by his inquisitors themselves; for they could not produce a shadow of one of the crimes with which they have charged him! I must own, Sir, I think that Sylla and my father ought to be set in opposition rather than paralleled.

My other objection is still more serious; and if I am so happy as to convince you, I shall hope that you will alter the paragraph; as it seems to impute something to Sir Robert of which he was not only most innocent, but of which, if he had been guilty, I should think him extremely so, for he would have been very ungrateful. You say he had not the comfort to see that he had established his own family by anything which he received from the gratitude of that Hanover family, or from the gratitude of that country, which he had saved and served! Good Sir, what does this sentence seem to imply, but that either Sir Robert himself, or his family, thought or think, that the Kings George I and II, or England, were ungrateful in not rewarding his services? Defend him and us from such a charge! He nor

we ever had such a thought. Was it not rewarding him to make him Prime Minister, and maintain and support him against his enemies for twenty years together? Did not George I make his eldest son a peer, and give to the father and son a valuable patent place in the Custom House for three lives? Did not George II give my elder brother the Auditor's place, and to my brother and me other rich places for our lives; for, though in the gift of the First Lord of the Treasury, do we not owe them to the King who made him so? Did not the late King make my father an Earl, and dismiss him with a pension of 4,000*l.* a year for his life? Could he or we not think these ample rewards? What rapacious sordid wretches must he and we have been, and be, could we entertain such an idea? As far have we all been from thinking him neglected by his country. Did not his country see and know these rewards? and could it think these rewards inadequate? Besides, Sir, great as I hold my father's services, they were solid and silent, not ostensible. They were of a kind to which I hold your justification a more suitable reward than pecuniary recompenses. To have fixed the house of Hanover on the throne, to have maintained this country in peace and affluence for twenty years, with the other services you record, Sir, were actions, the *éclat* of which must be illustrated by time and reflection; and whose splendour has been brought forwarder than I wish it had, by comparison with a period very dissimilar! If Sir Robert had not the comfort of leaving his family in affluence, it was not imputable to his King or his country. Perhaps I am proud that he did not. He died forty thousand pounds in debt. That was the wealth of a man that had been taxed as the plunderer of his country! Yet, with all my adoration of my father, I am just enough to own that it was his own fault if he died so poor. He had made Houghton much too magnificent for the moderate estate which he left to support

it; and, as he never—I repeat it with truth, *never*—got any money but in the South Sea and while he was Paymaster, his fondness for his paternal seat, and his boundless generosity, were too expensive for his fortune. I will mention one instance, which will show how little he was disposed to turn the favour of the crown to his own profit. He laid out fourteen thousand pounds of his own money on Richmond New Park. I could produce other reasons too why Sir Robert's family were not in so comfortable a situation, as the world, deluded by misrepresentation, might expect to see them at his death. My eldest brother had been a very bad economist during his father's life, and died himself fifty thousand pounds in debt, or more; so that to this day neither Sir Edward nor I have received the five thousand pounds apiece which Sir Robert left us as our fortunes. I do not love to charge the dead; therefore will only say that Lady Orford (reckoned a vast fortune, which till she died she never proved) wasted vast sums; nor did my brother or father *ever* receive but the twenty thousand pounds which she brought at first, and which were spent on the wedding and christening; I mean, including her jewels.

I beg pardon, Sir, for this tedious detail, which is minutely, perhaps too minutely, true; but, when I took the liberty of contesting any part of a work which I admire so much, I owed it to you and to myself to assign my reasons. I trust they will satisfy you; and, if they do, I am sure you will alter a paragraph against which it is the duty of the family to exclaim. Dear as my father's memory is to my soul, I can never subscribe to the position that he was unrewarded by the house of Hanover.

I have the honour to be, Sir, with great respect and gratitude,

Your most obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2448. To Governor Pownall.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 7, 1783.

You must allow me, Sir, to repeat my thanks for the second copy of your tract on my father, and for your great condescension in altering the two passages to which I presumed to object; and which are not only more consonant to exactness, but, I hope, no disparagement to the piece. To me they are quite satisfactory. And it is a comfort to me too, that what I begged to have changed was not any reflection prejudicial to his memory; but, in the first point, a parallel not entirely similar in circumstances; and, in the other, a sort of censure on others to which I could not subscribe. With all my veneration for my father's memory, I should not remonstrate against just censure on him. Happily, to do justice to him, most iniquitous calumnies ought to be removed; and then there would remain virtues and merits enough, far to outweigh human errors, from which the best of men, like him, cannot be exempt. Let his enemies, ay, and his *friends* be compared with him, and then justice would be done! Your essay, Sir, will, I hope, some time or other, clear the way to his vindication. It points out the true way of examining his character; and is itself, as far as it goes, unanswerable. As such, what an obligation it must be to, Sir,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

2449. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 8, 1783.

I am glad to have heard from you at last. I thought you had dropped me; which would be a little unkind, as,

perhaps, I may not long be *a charge* to anybody. I have scarce enjoyed two days of health together since I saw you. My rheumatism is not gone, and a sciatica, finding how many of the family were established with me, came to join its cousins. In short, my decay wears as many countenances as life itself does. I break very sensibly to myself in every respect—but enough of that.

Your committee I should not have named if you did not. When I found we differed in opinions, I said no more. That you should be tired of them does not surprise me: it is what I foresaw would happen. I have had much more practice of that sort than you. I have been acquainted with parties all my life, and at times have been far engaged in them. I will tell you a reflection I made in 1766: *that it is vexatious even to govern fools: and as vexatious not to have fools enough to govern,*—which perhaps may be your case. I told you truly above a year ago, that I would meddle no more with politics: and I have adhered to my resolution. I saw a moment (which I had long despaired of seeing arrive) thrown away by the treachery of Lord Shelburne, and I had not youth or spirits to recommence the pursuit. After that, when his folly had done mischief to his country and but momentary good to himself, I saw that two parties being split into three factions, it must happen that two of them would unite; and it was indifferent to me whether North, Mansfield, and Loughborough, or Thurlow, Dundas, Jenkinson, and Shelburne were to be adopted—so that, coalition for coalition, one is as bad as the other. As I have no views to serve, no personal resentments to gratify, I cannot embrace either division, when all were equally guilty, except that I think worst of the traitor, who prevented the good that might have been done a year and a half ago, and who broke the former opposition to pieces. I must die consistent as I have lived, and cannot bring myself to say

that either half of the criminals deserved to be hanged, and the other half to be pardoned.

But do you know that I suspect your having a graver reason than you mention for being disgusted? Indeed, I flatter myself you had, as in that offence I should heartily concur with you: it is on a point in which we have ever agreed. You cannot approve a correspondence with a Popish army; you cannot believe that an army of 40,000 men, 30,000 of whom are Papists, are fit instruments to reform a Protestant constitution, to establish liberty, or to protect the property of Protestants to which Roman Catholics think they have a better title. You, whose sentiments of him I know, cannot *coalesce* with the prelatic Earl[1], nor wish success to a toleration which you so much condemned, which was devised by the court, and was infused into our friends, and is at this moment loudly avowed and encouraged by one of whom I am sure you do not think well. No change of times or persons, no heterogeneous commixture of the partisans that lead factions, can authorize or justify an adoption of Catholics into civil government. This has ever been—ever will be my ruling principle. Papists and liberty are contradictions, and so, I fear, it will too soon appear!

When I am in so grave a strain, I will pass to the latter part of your letter before I reply to other passages in the former part. You amaze me by even supposing that the epitaph I sent you could allude to the immortality of the soul. Believe me, I think it is as serious a subject as you do, nor, I am sure, did you ever hear me treat it lightly. The three last lines, which justly offended you, if you so interpreted them, were intended to laugh at the absurd idea of the beatified sitting on golden thrones, and chanting

Letter 2449.—[1] The Earl of Bristol.

eternal allelujahs to golden harps. When men ascribe their own puerile conceptions to the Almighty Author of all things, what do they but prove that their visions are of human invention? What can be more ridiculous than to suppose that Omnipotent Goodness and Wisdom created, and will select the most virtuous of its creatures to sing His praises to all eternity?—it is an idea that I should think could never have entered but into the head of a king, who might delight to have his courtiers sing Birthday odes for ever.

Pray be assured that I never trifle on so solemn and dear an interest as the immortality of the soul; though I do not subscribe to every childish and fantastic employment that silly people have chalked out for it. There is no word in any language expressive enough for the adoration and gratitude we owe to the Author of all good! An eternity of praises and thanks is due to Him; but are we thence to infer that *that* is the sole tribute in which He will delight, and the sole occupation He destines for beings on whom He has bestowed thought and reason? The epitaph did not deserve half a line to be said on it; but your criticism, indeed your misconception of it, will excuse my saying so much in my own justification. It is no irreligion to smile at a chorister's notions of Paradise. Perhaps I, on my side, may have misunderstood you too—forgive me if I have; but you do not seem so serious on the tragedy you have been writing as I wish you were. I shall be very glad if you was in earnest. One of my most fervent wishes has long been that you would exercise more frequently the *verve* that is so eminently marked as your characteristic talent: your neglect of it is one of my quarrels to your Association. Ten thousand and ten thousand reasons forbid your rising to illustrious fame as secondary leader of a county meeting; you have but to

shut the door of your room and take your pen and choose your place on Parnassus.

I will dispense with your improving painting and music, and apropos, I thank you very much for your receipt, and ten times more for the hopes you give me of a picture by your hand; in short, I may be an officious, nay, impertinent zealot, but I am jealous of everything that intercepts your renown. I have that partiality for a genuine and original genius that I cannot bear its turning to the right or left. To *invent* in the arts as you have done in both those I have mentioned, is no deviation, but new proofs of genius. It is none when you tell me I have an ear; alas! it is what I most sensibly felt I want: but I shall not talk on so poor a subject as myself, and you may be sure I am sincere, by my worship of Gray and you. Only men who feel their own inferiority are enthusiasts to others.

Thank you for your corrected epitaph, and pray tell me more of your tragedy.

P.S. In looking again at your letter, I find you are to be at York on Tuesday, 11th, consequently will set out on the 10th, and then this might not find you at Aston or York, if directed to the one or the other; therefore, as it contains nothing that will not keep cold, I shall not dispatch it till Monday, when it is sure of finding you resident at York.

2450. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 8, 1783.

I doubt, Madam, that when I do go to Strawberry, I shall not be able to discover the lady who owns the tree and five of hearts. It seems to be a German coat-of-arms, and my heraldry does not extend so far. If I knew the name of the village where the building, that sounds as if designed for

a chapel, stands, one may perhaps find some mention of it in Dugdale or Tanner [1].

My rheumatism and its appendages are much better, thank your Ladyship, for the warm atmosphere of London. They made me afraid to venture to Mrs. Hobart's play, for though I have always been brave about the gout, the rheumatism has made me a great coward. The first goes when it has had its swing, and does not return, till, like a comet, it has made its revolution. The other may never leave one, or come back the day after it has disappeared; however, as mine seems to be put upon the establishment, I shall talk no more of it.

The town is so empty, or rather I have lost so many of my acquaintance, that I have scarce seen anybody since I came. I have not heard a word of Lord Spencer's [2] will, nor of the relict, but that she is retired to St. Albans [3].

My chief entertainment has been in reading the mutual philippics of Messrs. Flood and Grattan [4], who, if you believe their accounts of each other, are *very honourable men.*

LETTER 2450. — [1] Bishop of St. Asaph, and author of *Notitia Monastica*, a history of religious houses in England and Wales.

[2] The first Earl Spencer; d. Oct. 31, 1783.

[3] She lived at Holywell House (now demolished), built by the great Duke of Marlborough when he purchased the estates of his wife's family, the Jenningses, at Sandridge, near St. Albans.

[4] 'On 28 Oct. 1783, in the debate on Sir Henry Cavendish's motion for retrenchment in the expenses of the country, the famous collision between the two great Irish orators took place. The speeches of both were full of the bitterest personal invective. Flood, alluding to the grant which Parliament had bestowed upon Grattan, referred to him as "the mendicant patriot who was bought by my country for a sum of money, and then sold my country for prompt payment," and concluded by saying that "if the gentleman enters often into this kind of controversy with me, he will not have much to boast of at the end of the session." While Grattan, after comparing Flood to an "ill-omen'd bird of night with sepulchral notes, a cadaverous aspect and broken beak," and asserting that neither minister nor people could trust him, concluded his speech with the following words: "I therefore tell you in the face of your country, before all the world, and to your beard, you are not an honest man." . . . The quarrel nearly ended in a duel. . . . With this incident their friendship of twenty years terminated.' (*D.N.B.* art. Flood, Henry.)

There is a little book which you would not read if you could, called *Elegantiae Latini Sermonis.* Hibernian elegance is not a whit behind it in displaying naked truth, though of another kind. Well! I am very glad there is so much animosity amongst them: alas! for these eight or ten years one has been forced to wish for mischief lest worse mischief should happen. In short, I have found out that the love of one's country makes one a wicked animal, and hope for plagues in all the rest of the world!

Would not one think, Madam, that there was evil enough toward, and that quiet I might escape in the hurly-burly? Yet, this morning at breakfast, I was saluted with the first scene of my old tragedy, all sugared over with comfits like a twelfth-cake. I have been writing to Mr. Woodfall, to beg to buy myself out of his claws, and to lecture him for his gross compliments. I have ever laughed when I have seen little men called *great*, and I will not bear to be made ridiculous in the same way.

I fear you will hear melancholy accounts of poor Lady W., but it is not a subject for a letter.

You say, *we* shall be found at Ampthill till after Christmas, probably. I am very sorry for it, though a little comforted by the *probably*, which at least is not a definitive term. The long evenings before Christmas are just the time when I most wish your Ladyship here, as then one can have a little society without a mob. In spring everybody is running after everybody, or waiting till supper-time for those they expect to dinner. Though you say *we*, I depend on seeing our Lord next week[5], and though I hope his individuality will not be absolutely necessary, yet surely the more numerous the appearance the better. Nay, I should hope your Ladyship's zeal would rather accompany him, than keep a drawback to Ampthill. It is

[5] At the opening of Parliament.

in every light so serious a moment, that I could almost chide you for having philosophy enough to look at it from a distance. I who hang but by a thread, and from whom no threads hang, could not be so indifferent.

2451. To the Earl of Strafford.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 10, 1783.

If I consulted my reputation as a writer, which your Lordship's partiality is so kind as to allot me, I should wait a few days till my granary is fuller of stock, which probably it would be by the end of next week; but, in truth, I had rather be a grateful, and consequently a punctual correspondent, than an ingenious one; as I value the honour of your Lordship's friendship more than such tinsel bits of fame as can fall to my share, and of which I am particularly sick at present, as the *Public Advertiser* dressed me out t'other day with a heap of that dross, which he had pillaged from some other strolling playwrights, who I did not desire should be plundered for me.

Indeed, when the Parliament does meet, I doubt, nay hope, it will make less sensation than usual. The orators of Dublin have brought the flowers of Billingsgate to so high perfection, that ours comparatively will have no more scent than a dead dandelion. If your Lordship has not seen the speeches of Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan, you may perhaps still think that our oyster-women can be more abusive than members of Parliament.

Since I began my letter, I hear that the meeting of the delegates from the Volunteers[1] is adjourned to the first of February. This seems a very favourable circumstance. I don't like a reformation begun by a Popish army! Indeed.

Letter 2451. — [1] Delegates from the Irish Volunteers held a Convention in Dublin in Nov. 1783, and passed resolutions demanding Parliamentary reform.

I did hope that peace would bring us peace, at least not more than the discords incidental to a free government: but we seem not to have attained that era yet! I hope it will arrive, though I may not see it. I shall not easily believe that any radical alteration of a constitution that preserved us so long, and carried us to so strong a height, will recover our affairs. There is a wide difference between correcting abuses and removing landmarks. Nobody disliked more than I the strides that were attempted towards increasing the prerogative; but as the excellence of our constitution, above all others, consists in the balance established between the three powers of King, Lords, and Commons, I wish to see that equilibrium preserved. No single man, nor any private junto, has a right to dictate laws to all three. In Ireland, truly, a still worse spirit I apprehend to be at bottom; in short, it is frenzy or folly to suppose that an army composed of three parts of Catholics can be intended for any good purposes.

These are my sentiments, my dear Lord, and, you know, very disinterested. For myself, I have nothing to wish but ease and tranquillity for the rest of my time. I have no enmities to avenge. I do hope the present administration will last, as I believe there are *more* honest men in it than in any set that could replace them, though I have not a grain of partiality more than I had for their associates. Mr. Fox I think by far the ablest and soundest head in England, and am persuaded that the more he is tried the greater man he will appear.

Perhaps it is impertinent to trouble your Lordship with my creed, it is certainly of no consequence to anybody; but I have nothing else that could entertain you, and at so serious a crisis can one think of trifles? In general I am not sorry that the nation is most disposed to trifle; the less it takes part, the more leisure will the ministers have

to attend to the most urgent points. When so many individuals assume to be legislators, it is lucky that very few obey their institutes.

I rejoice to hear of Lady Strafford's good health, and am her and your Lordship's most faithful humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2452. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1783.

I HAVE been longer than usual without writing to you, my dear Sir; but so I told you in my last it was possible I should be. Had I written sooner, I could only have made excuses for having nothing to say. I have now the satisfaction of telling you that the political horizon is much cleared, and discovers a more serene prospect. The Parliament met yesterday, and the address to the King was voted without a negative. The threatened opposition is disjointed, and half of its expected leaders did not appear. The late *ridiculous* minister, Lord Shelburne (which is using the most favourable of all the epithets he deserves), keeps in the country. Lord Temple made a speech in the Lords which nobody minded or answered; and Mr. William Pitt in the Commons behaved with candour and great decency. Mr. Fox shone with new superiority; but even masterly eloquence is not his first quality. All his conduct is manly, and marked with strong sense, and first-rate common sense, which is the most useful of all. In short, he has *that*, and frankness and firmness, and the utmost good humour; and therefore you will not wonder I am partial to him, and think him the only man I have seen who unites all those qualities like my father. I wish he may be minister as long—which is a very disinterested wish at my age. I don't believe you suspect that it is interested for any part of the term.

The preliminaries with Holland are signed; nay, Ireland seems to be coming to its senses. One thing they have taken from us and improved, which I do not envy,—Parliamentary scurrility. Mr. Grattan, their late idol, and Mr. Flood (who, they say, might be the idol of Indians, who worship the powers that can do most mischief) have called one another as many foul names as Scaliger and Scioppius used to throw in Latin at the heads of their adversaries. It is pity that one of them at least did not reserve a few for the Count-Bishop[1], whom you have seen in Italy, and who seems to have conceived there a passion for a red hat. Is not it odd to see an Emperor demolishing convents in the East, and a Protestant bishop pleading for Popery in the West? His son[2] has been as eccentric in a smaller line here, as you may have seen in the papers.

This is a slight sketch of public affairs: private news I have none. I now come to Cavalier Mozzi.

Ten days ago Mr. Duane told me that Sharpe and Lucas would be ready in a few days to lay the result of their most tedious consultation before us; and that he believed the upshot would be, that they would think we ought to allow *five* thousand pounds to my Lord. I smiled, and said to myself, 'They needed not to have taken five or six months to agree on an opinion which they might have delivered in five minutes, for it is precisely what both had settled long ago my Lord should have.' Sharpe said at first, that my Lord and Mozzi should divide the money in question, which

LETTER 2452.—[1] Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol, and Bishop of Londonderry; he endeavoured to excite the Irish Volunteers to insist on admitting Roman Catholics to seats in Parliament; and behaved in the most profligate and indecent manner. *Walpole.*

[2] Lord Hervey, eldest son of Lord Bristol, published an abusive attack in the newspapers on Lord Howe for not having fought the combined squadrons of France and Spain, when he went to relieve Gibraltar: Lord Howe challenged him, and Lord Hervey asked pardon. *Walpole.* —John Augustus Hervey (1757–1796), Lord Hervey; a captain in the navy; afterwards minister at Florence. He predeceased his father.

he called ten thousand; and Lucas above a year ago, I think I told you, told an impatient creditor of my Lord, that his Lordship would get *five* thousand from Cav. Mozzi. However, I said nothing then, reserving my reflection for a moment when it may come with more force. Nay, I even commanded myself this morning, when Lucas was with me, and produced their liquidated states, by which those honest men allot 5,457*l.* to my Lord. But my indignation took its revenge; for, on Lucas telling me that there was still *one* point on which Sharpe and he could not agree, which was on interest upon interest for arrears of my Lady's jointure, and which was originally founded on an iniquitous parallel demand which had been allowed by a villainy of old Cruwys [3], Lucas's predecessor, and by which my father's creditors were defrauded of 18,000*l.*, I broke out, called Cruwys all the rascals he deserved (not meaning to except his successor), and told him, that even if Mozzi's claim should not be allowed, the money ought not to go to my Lord, but to the creditors. At last I said plainly that Mr. Duane and I were not at all bound to submit to his and Sharpe's opinion, but ordered them to deliver their reasons to us in writing; and that, for my part, I would lay those reasons before Lord Camden, for being no lawyer myself, I would be justified by having the opinion of one of the first lawyers in England for the judgement I should pronounce. This, I trust, will make him less flippant. He had begun by saying Mr. Duane and I would be able to decide in a few minutes; which was pretty impudent, considering that even he and Sharpe do not agree on one point: but I repeated that we should not have such implicit faith; we had only desired to know on what points *they* did agree. Upon the whole, I fear this

[3] Thomas Cruwys, who had been employed to draw the settlements on the marriage of Robert, second Earl of Orford, and Miss Rolle, and who was afterwards employed by that Lord in his business. *Walpole.*

affair will not be so soon concluded. Nay, I perceive so much roguery, that, as I cannot unravel it, I shall be very unwilling to pronounce; being persuaded that Cav. Mozzi will be cheated. Lucas pretended just now to have found but yesterday a scrap of paper *without a title*, that proved, under the hand of Lady Orford's steward, that she had received more from her jointure than was pretended. I asked him in a very severe tone where he had found that bit of paper. He said, amongst my Lord's writings. I replied, it was very extraordinary that he, who for so many years had been poring over my Lord's writings, should never have taken notice of that paper before;—nor do I conceive how a paper of my Lady's steward came there! In a word, I told Lucas plainly that all he had said to-day had confirmed me much more strongly in what I thought before of Cruwys's villainy, and of the justness of the arguments I had used to show that what had been deemed law for my brother ought to be law for Lady Orford, and that what a jury had given to one ought to be given by a jury to the other. This he owned; but said the money ought to go to my Lord as executor. 'If it does,' said I, 'will my Lord pay it to the creditors?' He replied, 'I suppose he will: he has paid much more to them.' I could have answered, 'Much less than he ought.'—Oh, my good Sir, do you wonder, after all I have seen, that I have a dismal opinion of the three professions—lawyers, clergy, and physicians? 'Tis well I am come to the bottom of my paper, or I should continue invectiving.

2453. To Sir Horace Mann.

Nov. 21, 1783.

I am exceedingly hurt to be forced to tell you that I shall not be able to do so much service to Cavalier Mozzi as I

hoped; nor should I have it in my power to do any, if I threw up my refereeship, as I have been on the point of doing: but I will tell you methodically, and as shortly as I can, what passed yesterday. The three lawyers came to me. As soon as Lucas had opened the points on which Sharpe and he are agreed, and by which they give a balance to my Lord of 5,457*l.*, I said with all the sneer I could put into a look, 'It was unlucky, gentlemen, that you flung away six months to compute what you guessed so exactly a year and a half ago! You both said, *so long* ago, that my Lord would or ought to have five thousand pounds.' Lucas understood me; but I afterwards made *him* understand a great deal more, which I will not repeat now. We then came to the point of interest, on which he and Sharpe still disagree, and by which Lucas would extort 1,900*l.* for my Lord. Sharpe did behave handsomely, and would have set it *all* aside. I then spoke, and called on Lucas to acknowledge that I at first declared in writing to my Lord that I would not undertake the office of umpire, unless I were allowed to act as a gentleman, and not as a lawyer. (This Lucas could not deny.) I then stated all the Cavalier's handsome behaviour. I appealed to Sharpe, who knew all, whether I could be partial to my Lady and her friend. (This Sharpe allowed.) I said I had accepted the office only to save her honour and my Lord's from being bandied about in a public court of justice; but that since I found that the law was stretched to the utmost against Cav. Mozzi, and as I was unwilling to pronounce against my Lord, whose side I was to maintain, or to be thought partial for him, I chose to throw up my trust, and leave the whole to be decided at law. I was then silent for some minutes. At last Mr. Duane spoke, and said that as Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Lucas had agreed on the 5,457*l.*, and that he and I during the former discussions had in general allowed their several demands; and that we

had allowed very liberally to my Lord—Lucas interrupted him, and would not acknowledge that we had allowed *liberally* to his Lordship; but both Duane and Sharpe insisted we had. Mr. Duane then proposed to Lucas to desire my Lord to give up the interest to Cav. Mozzi, which would be 1,900*l.*, and would, by so much, lessen the 5,457*l.* Lucas said very awkwardly, he would, and was sure my Lord would agree to anything; but seemed exceedingly dissatisfied. Sharpe and Lucas then took their leaves; and Duane was going, but I kept him, and beseeched him to tell me honestly what I ought to do. I should tell you that Sharpe had proposed to give up the interest on both sides. Mr. Duane said that he advised me by all means not to leave the affair undecided; that it must then go to Chancery, where it would not be decided in a dozen years, or perhaps not in twenty;—that Cav. Mozzi would lose the whole interest of all the money in the meantime, and perhaps spend the principal in the pursuit; that it had always been his practice to advise adverse parties to split the difference; and therefore, of the 1,900*l.*, he would give my Lord half, and Mozzi half. I did not like this. At last I proposed my Lord should have 600*l.*, and the Cavalier the remaining 1,300*l.* I found Mr. Duane did not like this.—In short, we agreed at last that my Lord should have 6,400*l.*, and Cav. Mozzi the rest; and this he would go and offer to Sharpe. Thus, after all, of 10,500*l.*, the sum in dispute, I shall save Cav. Mozzi but 4,100*l.*! You will say I had better have let Lucas go and propose to my Lord to cede the 1,900*l.* It is true; but, besides that Lucas accepted the request so unwillingly, and not in a way to satisfy my Lord, I could not satisfy myself without talking to Mr. Duane alone; and, when I did, I found him so clear in what I ought to do, that I could not, from inclination to serve Cav. Mozzi, do what would be injustice to my Lord, whose cause I was

chosen to defend. In short, I am very unhappy, and shall not wonder if at last Cav. Mozzi suspects I have acted a double part; and have, notwithstanding all my professions, only meant to hurt him. Lucas, I am sure, still thinks just the contrary; at least, that I have been partial *against* my nephew: no; yet against Lucas I have, whom I did reproach with instigating my Lord to contest his mother's will, after he had said he would not. I do not care what my Lord or Lucas think; I have strictly followed Mr. Duane's opinion; and, as *he* could have no partiality, I chose to prefer his opinion to my own, as his could have no bias. Whatever Cav. Mozzi shall think, it is mortification enough to me to be outwitted by Lucas; but I could not suffer my wish of defeating him to supersede what I am told is justice.

I have attempted to carry a collateral point, in which I suppose I shall not be much more successful. In Lucas's warmth of pleading for my Lord, I discovered that the 6,000*l.* which my Lord is likely to recover from Mozzi (for observe, nothing is yet decided) ought to go to my brother's creditors, and can only be received by my nephew as executor. I pinned Lucas down to this confession; and both the other lawyers agreed I was in the right. I then wanted to have the 6,000*l.* deposited in the hands of trustees or a banker: but that, it seems, is not law; my Lord indeed being answerable for the money to the creditors, but nobody has a right or power to sequester it from him. However, when the decision shall be made, I shall declare to Lucas that I shall give my brother's creditors notice that there is such a sum, which they may claim.

I have thus told you the substance, and you may inform poor Mozzi of it. I will write again when I know any farther. I have done the best I could, and perhaps more than any one else could have done; yet I claim no merit. All evidence, except what little was in Sharpe's hands, was

in Lucas's, and he has certainly made the most of it. Had I not been present, who bore witness against him in some particulars of his own knowledge, I conclude he would have gained more from Mr. Duane, who, as a lawyer, must be a little biased by law arguments; yet I believe, though I explained much to him, that his love of peace, and the disagreeable consequences he foresaw from a legal suit, chiefly influenced his judgement. I have not room or time to add a word more.

Nov. 25, after dinner.

P.S. As I was going to seal my letter, I received one from Mr. Duane, which obliges me to add a postscript. He says that Mr. Sharpe has convinced him by arguments, which I have not time to particularize, that Cav. Mozzi ought to have more than we had allotted to him. (This shows Sharpe has not quite sacrificed his client;—indeed, I have always specified every instance in which I thought he acted justly.) Mr. Duane therefore advises to let Lucas make the proposal above named to my Lord, and wait his answer. If it is not favourable, he says we may then offer 5,600*l.*, or at least enlarge it. I certainly agree to wait, and willingly; but I send my letter notwithstanding: though you need not read the particulars to Cav. Mozzi yet. It is hard to be a judge in a law affair, of which I am no judge. I have acted throughout from good nature to Cav. Mozzi, whom I thought ill-treated; and to avoid scandal. I have done the best I could—I have made Lucas my enemy more than he was before, and I have not managed him; though I do not doubt but he will represent my conduct to my Lord in the worst light; and, though Mozzi may suspect me of favouring my nephew, I have probably added new alacrity to the wretches who wish my Lord to disinherit me, should I outlive him,—but that is certainly what I do not expect to do; and, when I have scorned to court him or them, be

assured I would not flatter him at the expense of another. In short, I have done right to the best of my judgement, and cannot help what is thought of me.

2454. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 2, 1783.

We have not yet terminated poor Cav. Mozzi's business. Lucas is highly dissatisfied at our offering my Lord what he calls *but* 6,000*l.*, and I am as much displeased at offering so much; but Mr. Duane thinks the 5,457*l.* must be allowed, though Lucas, I believe, would find it very difficult to prove so in a court of law: and, as we fear we must agree to divide the remaining 1,800*l.* in question, we probably shall be reduced to fix the whole sum for my Lord at 6,400*l.*, as I told you in my last. At present we wait for an answer from Cav. Mozzi to Mr. Sharpe's last, and expect it in a week. Upon the whole, I shall have done sadly; and at best shall only have saved him from an eternal suit in Chancery.

Your nephew is in town, but confined by the gout. I called on him, but did not see him; yet you may be very easy, for he expects to be abroad in a day or two. I can make you as easy about another point, too; but, if you have not learnt it from him, do not take notice to him that you know it. Mrs. Noel has informed me that his daughter's treaty of marriage is broken off, and in a fortunate way. The peer, father of the lover, obliged *him* to declare off; and Mrs. Noel says that your niece is in good spirits. All this is just what one should have wished. Your nephew has sent me a good and most curious print from you of the Old Pretender's marriage: I never saw one before. It is a great present to my collection of English portraits. The Farnesian books I have not yet received, and have forgotten the name of the gentleman to whom you entrusted them,

and must search amongst your letters for it; or, tell it me again.

The politicians of London, who at present are not the most numerous corporation, are warm on a bill for a new regulation of the East Indies[1], brought in by Mr. Fox. Some even of his associates apprehended his being defeated, or meant to defeat him; but his marvellous abilities have hitherto triumphed conspicuously, and on two divisions in the House of Commons he had majorities of 109 and 114. On *that* field he will certainly be victorious: the forces will be more nearly balanced when the Lords fight the battle; but, though the opposition will have more generals and more able, he is confident that his troops will overmatch theirs; and, in Parliamentary engagements, a superiority of numbers is not vanquished by the talents of the commanders, as often happens in more martial encounters. His competitor, Mr. Pitt, appears by no means an adequate rival. Just like their fathers, Mr. Pitt has brilliant language, Mr. Fox solid sense; and such luminous powers of displaying it clearly, that mere eloquence is but a Bristol stone, when set by the diamond reason.

Do not wonder that we do not entirely attend to the things of earth: fashion has ascended to a higher element. All our views are directed to the air. *Balloons* occupy senators, philosophers, ladies, everybody. France gave us the *ton*; and, as yet, we have not come up to our model. Their monarch is so struck with the heroism of two of his subjects who adventured their persons in two of these new *floating batteries*, that he has ordered statues of them, and contributed a vast sum towards their marble immortality.

LETTER 2454.—[1] By this bill the authority of the Company was to be transferred to seven commissioners, nominated by Parliament for four years, after which time they were to be named by the Crown. The management of commerce was to be in the hands of a committee of Directors named by the proprietors. (See Acland and Ransome's *English Political History*, p. 150.)

All this may be very important: to me it looks somewhat foolish. Very early in my life I remember this town at gaze on a man who *flew down* a rope from the top of St. Martin's steeple[2]; now, late in my day, people are staring at a voyage to the moon. The former Icarus broke his neck at a subsequent flight: when a similar accident happens to modern knights-errant, adieu to air-balloons.

Apropos, I doubt these new kites have put young Astley's[3] nose out of joint, who went to Paris lately under their Queen's protection, and expected to be Prime Minister, though he only ventured his neck by dancing a minuet on three horses at full gallop, and really in that attitude has as much grace as the Apollo Belvedere. When the arts are brought to such perfection in Europe, who would go, like Sir Joseph Banks, in search of islands in the Atlantic, where the natives have in six thousand years not improved the science of carving fishing-hooks out of bones or flints! Well! I hope these new mechanic meteors will prove only playthings for the learned and the idle, and not be converted into new engines of destruction to the human race, as is so often the case of refinements or discoveries in science. *The wicked wit of man always studies to apply the result of talents to enslaving, destroying, or cheating his fellow creatures.* Could we reach the moon, we should think of reducing it to a province of some European kingdom.

5th.

P.S. The opposition in the House of Commons were so humbled by their two defeats, that, though Mr. Pitt had

[2] Wright notes: 'On the 1st of June, 1727, one Violante, an Italian, descended head foremost by a rope, with his legs and arms extended, from the top of the steeple of St. Martin's Church, over the houses in St. Martin's Lane, to the farthest side of the Mews, a distance of about three hundred yards, in half a minute. The crowd was immense; and the young Princesses, with several of the nobility, were in the Mews.'

[3] Son of a man who exhibited in Southwark, and established an amphitheatre there for extraordinary feats in riding, rope-dancing, &c. *Walpole.*

declared he would contest every clause (of the India Bill) in the committee (where in truth, if the bill is so bad as he says, he ought at least to have tried to amend it), that he slunk from the contest, and all the blanks were filled up without obstruction, the opponents promising only to resist it in its last stage on Monday next; but really, having no hopes but in the House of Lords, where, however, I do not believe they expect to succeed. Mr. Pitt's reputation is much sunk; nor, though he is a much more correct logician than his father, has he the same firmness and perseverance. It is no wonder that he was dazzled by his own premature fame; yet his late checks may be of use to him, and teach him to appreciate his strength better, or to wait till it is confirmed. Had he listed under Mr. Fox, who loved and courted him, he would not only have discovered modesty, but have been more likely to succeed him, than by commencing his competitor. But what [have] I to do to look into futurity?

2455. To Sir Horace Mann.

Dec. 1783.

Rasserena il mesto ciglio; non è ver? there have been no *tumults* in Ireland; and I write again so soon to dissipate your alarms. I do not tell you that there have not been bad *designs* on foot. Ambitious and disappointed incendiaries have been at work, and had raised a spirit which might have given trouble; but their views were too obvious, and could not have taken place without producing such danger as could not fail to strike all who have sensible honesty or property. The two Houses of Parliament have acted with the highest integrity, wisdom, firmness, and dignity. They

Letter 2455.—Collated with original in possession of the late Sir T. V. Lister marked 'not finished, nor sent.'

would not endure a congress of delegates from an armed multitude[1] nosing them in their legislative capacity, but peremptorily refused to listen to their demands; declared against any alteration of the constitution, and announced a resolution of maintaining the King's title with their lives and fortunes; and, indeed, if they would not risk their lives in its defence, they would have risked their own fortunes.

The mimic congress were abashed, closed their session, and voted a most loyal, decent, modest address to the King; and it is to be brought over by Mr. Flood, who has been a principal engine of confusion, but who probably did not wish, or mean to go so far as that mitred Proteus, the Count-Bishop, who, I dare to say, would be glad of a red hat, and whose crimes you are infinitely too charitable in not seeing in the blackest light; nor can they be palliated, but by his profligate folly. In truth, his extravagant indecency has been as serviceable to the government, as overwhelming to himself. His immorality, martial pretences, and profaneness, covered him with odium and derision. Blasphemy was the puddle in which he washed away his episcopal Protestantism, though, perhaps, he flatters himself that as episcopacy is deemed an indelible character, he shall be *admitted ad eundem* (as they say at Cambridge and Oxford) into the Church of Rome. Do you know that this champion of liberty was so violent an anti-American, that when last at Paris, he was so abusive on Dr. Franklin and the colonies, that he was ordered to depart on pain of the Bastile? His brother-Proteus, Lord Shelburne, would last year have sent him to Versailles to make the peace, but the indignity he had received thence rankled in his heart, and he refused; or, to be a peace-maker was too much in the character of a bishop, for such a *bishop* to accept! The mission of his

[1] The Volunteers.

daughter[2], and the circumstances, are just as you have heard them. You may add, that though the daughter of an Earl in lawn sleeves, who has an income of four or five and twenty thousand a year, he suffers her from indigence to accept 300*l.* a year as governess to a natural child[3]. Last year, he let his own house in St. James's Square for the usurious rent of 700*l.* a year, and without acquainting his Countess, who is a very respectable woman. I tell you these things for your information and for your private ear, that you may keep an eye on the negotiations of such a detestable character. But do not mention them, as it would be guessed whence you received them. I do not love to spread scandalous histories, though strictly true, and notorious both here and in Ireland, where a much longer and more bitter account of this new Alberoni has been published. If your *neighbour*[4] conceives hopes from this legate, or from higher or more dexterous friends, he will end life as he began it, in disappointment. That the Bras Cassé[5] should pity him, I do not wonder. An usurper must feel for the descendant of a punished tyrant—perhaps, he *more* than pities. Your nephew carried your letter whither you desired, and I have since given a comment to it from what you said to me, which you will perceive I understood, and shall turn to your advantage.

2456. To the Earl of Strafford.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 11, 1783.

Your Lordship is so partial to me and my idle letters, that I am afraid of writing them; not lest they should sink

[2] Lady Elizabeth Foster (d. 1824), eldest daughter of fourth Earl of Bristol, and wife of John Thomas Foster. She married secondly (1809) the fifth Duke of Devonshire.

[3] Daughter of the Duke of Devonshire by Miss Spenser. *Walpole.*

[4] The Pretender. *Walpole.*

[5] King of Sweden, then at Florence. *Walpole.*

below the standard you have pleased to affix to them in your own mind, but from fear of being intoxicated into attempting to keep them up to it, which would destroy their only merit, their being written naturally and without pretensions. Gratitude and good breeding compel me to make due answers; but I entreat your Lordship to be assured, that, however vain I am of your favour, my only aim is to preserve the honour of your friendship; that it is all the praise I ask or wish; and that, with regard to letter-writing, I am firmly persuaded that it is a province in which women will always shine superiorly; for our sex is too jealous of the reputation of good sense, to condescend to hazard a thousand trifles and negligences, which give grace, ease, and familiarity to correspondence. I will say no more on that subject, for I feel that I am on the brink of a dissertation; and though that fault would prove the truth of my proposition, I will not punish your Lordship only to convince you that I am in the right.

The winter is not dull or disagreeable: on the contrary, it is pleasing, as the town is occupied on general subjects, and not, as is too common, on private scandal, private vices, and follies. The India Bill, air-balloons, Vestris, and the automaton[1], share all attention. Mrs. Siddons, as less a novelty, does not engross all conversation. If abuse still keeps above par, it confines itself to its prescriptive province, the ministerial line. In that walk it has tumbled a little into the kennel. The low buffoonery of Lord Thurlow, in laying the caricature of the coalition on the table of your Lordship's House, has levelled it to Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Flood, the pillar of invective, does not promise to re-erect it; not, I conclude, from want of having imported a stock of ingredients, but his presumptuous début on the

LETTER 2456. — [1] A mechanical chess-player made by an Austrian— Wolfgang, Baron von Kempelen (1734–1804).

very night of his entry[2] was so wretched, and delivered in so barbarous a brogue, that I question whether he will ever recover the blow Mr. Courtenay gave him. A young man may correct and improve, and rise from a first fall; but an elderly formed speaker has not an equal chance. Mr. Hamilton[3], Lord Abercorn's heir, but by no means so laconic, had more success. Though his first essay, it was not at all dashed by bashfulness; and though he might have blushed for discovering so much personal rancour to Mr. Fox, he rather seemed to be impatient to discharge it.

Your Lordship sees in the papers that the two Houses of Ireland have firmly resisted the innovations of the Volunteers. Indeed, it was time for the Protestant proprietors to make their stand; for though the Catholics behave decently, it would be into their hands that the prize would fall. The delegates, it is true, have sent over a most loyal address; but I wish their actions may not contradict their words! Mr. Flood's discomfiture here will, I suppose, carry him back to a field wherein his wicked spirit may have more effect. It is a very serious moment! I am in pain lest your county, my dear Lord (you know what I mean), should countenance such pernicious designs.

I am impatient for next month, for the pleasure of seeing your Lordship and Lady Strafford, and am of both the devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

[2] Flood entered the English House of Commons in Oct. 1783 as one of the members for Winchester. His career there was a failure. On the present occasion he attacked Fox's India Bill.

[3] John James Hamilton (1756–1818), son of Captain Hon. John Hamilton, second son of seventh Earl of Abercorn; succeeded his uncle as ninth Earl of Abercorn in 1789, and was created Marquis of Abercorn in 1790.

2457. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 15, 1783.

I write you in great haste a few lines, which will surprise and perplex you, as I cannot enter into any explanation.

The town is full of rumour of a change of administration. No such thing has happened; but enough has happened at least to countenance such a report. You will be cautious, therefore, till you hear farther, what you write. Mention no politics, but to the ministers, as you ought to do.

Everything goes as well as possible in Ireland. You are much too candid when you impute no bad designs to the person[1] whose speech has been Italianized. The circumstances of governess and child are true just as you heard them[2].

I have received the two books of Caprarola from Lord Algernon Percy: I had quite forgotten to whom you had consigned them. It is not a way of speaking, but I do insist on your letting me know what they cost, that I may pay your nephew. You would deprive me of the pleasure of troubling you now and then with a little commission, if you do not let me reimburse you. I shall employ Sir W. Hamilton in that way, if you forbid my applying to you; which you will do effectually, if you do not send me the prices of the *Fatti Farnesiani*.

No answer is come yet to Sharpe from Cavalier Mozzi.

Tuesday, 16th.

An event has now happened that is decisive. The ministers

Letter 2457.—[1] Dr. Hervey, Bishop of Derry and Earl of Bristol. He had sent to Rome a speech he had made in favour of the Roman Catholics: it was translated into Italian, printed, and dispersed. *Walpole.*

[2] Lady Elizabeth Foster, daughter of the Earl, who was parted from her husband, went to France at the expense of the Duke of Devonshire with a natural daughter of his Grace. *Walpole.*

were beaten last night in the House of Lords by eight votes on the India Bill[3]. *An administration beaten* often implies *a court beaten*; at present, the reverse is true. It is not proper to say more: but, as our newspapers seldom leave anything unexplained, though commonly falsified or blundered, you will not remain long in the dark. Adieu!

2458. To Sir Horace Mann.

Friday, Dec. 19, 1783.

I HAVE only a moment's time to tell you, that, at *one* this morning, his Majesty sent to Lord North and Mr. Fox for their seals of Secretary of State. It is said that Mr. Pitt is to be First Lord of the Treasury[1], and that the Parliament will be dissolved immediately[2]. I know nothing more. You will learn the new arrangements from the *Gazette* of to-morrow night or Tuesday, which last day is the soonest I could write again, for this must go away this evening. The Great Seal has been sent for from the Commissioners[3], and, it is supposed, will be given again to Lord Thurlow.

Friday evening.

I saw nobody after court; so, do not know what passed there, nor if anybody kissed hands; nor am likely to hear

[3] The King had sent for Lord Temple, and ordered him to declare that his Majesty did not approve of the India Bill, but wished to have it thrown out by the House of Lords; yet he had never signified that disapprobation to the Duke of Portland and the ministers. He went farther, and commanded the Lords of the Bedchamber to vote against it. *Walpole.*

LETTER 2458.—[1] The ministry was composed as follows:—Hon. William Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Earl Gower, President of the Council; Duke of Rutland, Privy Seal; Marquis of Carmarthen and Earl Temple, Secretaries of State; Duke of Richmond, Master General of the Ordnance; Viscount Howe, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Mulgrave and Hon. William Wyndham Grenville, Joint Paymasters; Lord Thurlow, Lord Chancellor, &c.

[2] The dissolution did not take place until March 1784.

[3] Lord Loughborough, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; Sir William Ashurst, Justice of the King's Bench; Sir Beaumont Hotham, Baron of the Exchequer.

before the end of the evening, for I almost always dine alone and early, and do not go out till eight o'clock, when it would be too late to send this to the Secretary's office.

If the Parliament is dissolved, as it may be by this time for aught I know, I shall go to Strawberry Hill, for nobody will be left in town, but all gone to their re-elections; so, I could only transcribe the *Gazette*, and be able to send you little news.

2459. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Dec. 30, 1783.

I am not such a buzzard, Madam, but that I did guess from your Ladyship's silence *and other circumstances*, that my last letter or two were not to your taste. I was, and perhaps shall be, a prophet; but as that is a profession never honoured in its own country (as I can say with truth and a little vanity I have often found), I shall touch on nothing you do not like. I obeyed your silence, lest I should say what you wished me not to say; and now you bid me write again, I am ready to talk nonsense rather than sense, being sure that I have much more talent for the one than the other. News, I know none, but that they are crying peerages about the streets in barrows, and can get none off. Lord Chesterfield[1] is named Ambassador to Spain, to pay off the old debt of sending us Gondomar, and the Foundling Hospital is to be converted into an academy of politicians.

I did mean to pass my holidays at Twickenham, but the weather is so severe I did not venture. I have been so perfectly well since I came to town, that I will not risk another rheumatism.

Letter 2459.—[1] Philip Stanhope (1755–1818), fifth Earl of Chesterfield, cousin and successor of the witty Earl.

American news may now be a neutral article; Washington, *qui, il me semble, tranche un peu du roi*, has instituted a military order, and calls it the order of Cincinnatus, *ce qui tranche un peu du pédant*. He sent it to La Fayette, and it made an uproar in Paris. As the *noblesse* spell only by the ear, they took it for the order of St. Senatus. They had recourse to the calendar, and, finding no such saint in heaven's almanac, they concluded it was a new canonization at Boston, and were enraged that Washington should encroach on the papacy as well as on the diadem. It may offend even the Bishop of Derry, who has renounced all religions to qualify himself for being a cardinal. Lord Edward Fitzgerald[2] told me last night that he fears the Volunteers are very serious: *sans compter* the spirits which the late revolution here may give them—but I had better break off, lest I offend by sliding into politics, which you dislike.

I shall like prodigiously to be teadrunkwith'd by Lady Ossory and the graces, whether they are consubstantial or only coexistent, and shall not regret Mdlle. Heinel, with

Her arms sublime that float upon the air.

You laugh at my distresses, Madam, but it is a very serious thing to have taken an old cook as yellow as a dishclout, and have her seduced by a jolly dog of a coachman, and have her miscarry of a child and go on with a dropsy. All my servants think that the moment they are useless I must not part with them, and so I have an infirmary instead of a *ménage*; and those that are good for anything do nothing but get children, so that my house is a mixture of a county and foundling hospital. I don't wonder at his Majesty, who

[2] Fifth son of first Duke of Leinster. He took an active part in the preparations for the Irish rebellion of 1798, and was mortally wounded (June 4, 1798) when resisting arrest for high treason.

has packed off the decrepit Earl and the procreative Bishop. Adieu till Thursday.

You accuse me of twenty things that I have no sort of title to, as sense, prudence, entertainment, jollity, and mystery. Who would ever think, Madam, of those being features in my character? It is like your desiring me to write and *promising* me not to say above two words in answer to my letters. Indeed, I shall not write on those terms. I have no more vanity than hypocrisy; and, if you would only substitute *indifference* in the place of all the attributes you have so graciously bestowed on me, you would find it the sole key to almost every action of my life for some time past, and I believe for all to come. With neither love nor hatred, with neither avarice nor ambition, it is very seldom that one grows a hypocrite after being the contrary. If I could be vain or forget myself, your Ladyship's compliments would have that effect; but, as they have not turned my head hitherto, I trust they will not be able, and then I am sure nothing else will, since I can boast and desire to boast of nothing but being yours, &c.

2460. To the Rev. William Mason.

Dec. [30], 1783.

I can give you no clearer proof of my inclination to please you than by writing at present, when I have no inclination for it myself. It is not from bad health, for I recovered it as soon as I came to town, the smoke of London agreeing better with me than keeping sheep on my hillock; but what can I write? Chaos, you say, is come again: yes, truly; and Pope might add:

Joy to great chaos! let division reign!

Letter 2460. — Hitherto dated Dec. 3, 1783. (See *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 22, 1900.)

but I have no joy in such confusions as are occasioned by heraldic *counter-changes*. It is playing at chess after jumbling all the pieces in a bag and placing them on the board indiscriminately, without separating the black from the white. Was I in the wrong to say that Lord Shelburne had disordered all system? Here are the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt in the arms of Jenkinson, and Lord Bute and Lord Mansfield in opposition. Unravel and arrange all this if you can. I know but one way, which is to overlook the performers and adhere to the cause, and then you will discern the principles which have for ever produced parties. I mean the true, which being the true, are always assumed, though the professors may mean nothing but themselves. So much for politics, which I should quit gladly, had I anything more amusing, or indeed anything else to tell you. It is scarce worth repeating, that a person was with me yesterday who is concerned in a new and more compendious way of printing. He told me he had sent his plan to, and then waited on, a quondam friend of yours, a certain *toaster*, who only said to him drily, 'Why did you send your book to me? I know nothing of printing.'

Yes! yes! I have a better story for you. Washington has instituted a new military order, called of Cincinnatus. He sent it to La Fayette. The Parisians cried, 'Diable! Saint Senatus, voilà un plaisant saint! qui est-ce qui en a jamais entendu parler?' The *dévots* recurred to *Les Vies des Saints*, and finding no such apostle in the Church's red book, they are very angry with Washington for encroaching on the Pope's prerogative of creating peers of the Upper House. For my part I think they attributed a much better patron to the new order than the pedantic one that Washington elected; nay, and tallying much better. A senate, like many of the beatified, may set out very debauched and repent at last, and cast up its vomit and die a martyr at its *dissolution*.

I now come to the pleasantest part of your letter, your tragedy[1]. I rejoice that you are in earnest, and shall detest your toothache or any associable twitches still more if they interrupt the completion. I interest myself zealously in the dignity of your genius, and wish you always to maintain, never to profane it. I do not mean that you should always be climbing the heights of Parnassus. You may sport in a valley with no less grace, but I will not allow you to hunt at Finsbury with Lord Mayors and aldermen. Tragedy is worthy of you, yet why care whether your buskins would pass muster before a jury of French shoemakers? Do you want a licenser to usher your piece to the press with a *par ordre de M. le Garde des Sceaux j'ai lu cette tragédie et je n'y ai rien trouvé qui doit en empêcher l'impression* (La Harpe)?

Don't make it too horrid neither, that it may be licensed at Athens. I was glad to plead the atrociousness of the one stage to shelter myself from the impertinent delicacy of the other; but I shall indulge *you* in no extremes. You possess the whole art and can do what you please; can touch a precipice, and glide down so imperceptibly that your descent shall appear natural and easy; while we, the less skilful, neither know how we got up nor how to come down: and then assure folks that certain Greeks two thousand years ago broke their necks with as little address, and were mightily admired for it. I require a perfect tragedy at your hands with no excesses in the construction, for all the rest I am in no pain; nor should be on that head had you not alarmed me. Mrs. Siddons, whom I have seen again, and like much better, though in that detestable play *The Gamester*, shall do you justice, and Lord Harcourt will be in the third heaven between her and you. Good night.

[1] A tragedy on an Indian subject on which Mason was engaged.

2461. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 3, 1784.

I have received your letter, dear Sir, and the four *Bibliothèques*, which since I have so many I wish to continue, though so many are most indifferent; and I will pay your son. I am very happy to have contributed in any degree to his establishment[1]; and I may agree with you in rejoicing that he will be removed from the disagreeable scenes here. This last revolution was the wildest and most indigested scheme possible; for, though long premeditated by, I believe, the *sole author*, no preparatory measures had been taken, nor scarce anybody consulted till very few days before the execution: the definitive resolution having been taken probably from the very *local* unpopularity of the India Bill with the persons interested here in town, and here only. The consequence is that, rebuffed in all decent offers, so contemptible and ridiculous a set have been picked up, that they would be laughed out again had they any real strength. But you will see by the list how very slender a portion of abilities lies amongst them. Do but think of the two Ambassadors[2]! Nor have they acquired one convert, nor made even an inconsiderable breach yet in the House of Commons. In short, this system can only last ten days more. What will happen next, I do not pretend to guess—perhaps what the person guessed who was asked about a certain road.

Such are the present consequences of that absurd rogue Lord Sh.'s[3] *finesses*! They soon blew up himself—no great harm. But he drew others after him, who are more to be

Letter 2461.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 70–5.

[1] As minister at Munich.

[2] The Duke of Dorset, Ambassador at Paris, and the Earl of Chesterfield, Ambassador at Madrid.

[3] Lord Shelburne.

lamented, and who will get into almost inextricable difficulties. Lord T.[4], one of his dupes, and not much more estimable, has already made a preposterous figure; and all their manœuvres together have compacted a body together that possesses almost all the abilities of this country. And you may guess what will be the success of rashness founded on weakness!

I should write a history, not a letter, were I to repeat half the extravagances of the last three weeks. Some indeed are too strong to be trusted to paper! It is my opinion that the accomplices, or accessories, will be frightened and desert. I know that they who used to move the occasional puppets *are* alarmed.

I am glad of the Duchess of Choiseul's recovery. In my own particular, indeed, I have no great reason to interest myself about her, or the Abbé Barthélemi; for, though out of civility to you, dear Sir, he may inquire after me, I have little opinion of his, or the Duchess's, regard for me. Though they both *seized* their letters, before I could have any notice, yet—as I had ordered them to be restored without being acquainted with that proceeding—they, at least, owed me either an excuse or thanks. I never received a word from either. In the Abbé it was impertinence; a great lady cannot be in the wrong, though she had professed so much friendship for me, and still more for my late dear friend. Indeed, the treatment I received from all concerned in her papers has given me no high opinion of French honour or French friendship. I should blush if my conduct had not been the very reverse. And, had they any delicacy, it would have taught them how to act.

Mr. White[5], who brings you this, is a bookseller with whom your son is well acquainted. He goes to purchase

[4] Lord Temple.

[5] Probably Benjamin White, a well-known bookseller, who died in 1794.

books at the Duc de la Valière's sale. I have given him some commissions at a very high rate, and yet do not expect, indeed almost hope not, to obtain the articles, especially as I have never seen them, and may be much disappointed when I do. But, as the occasion is unique, and as I should be vexed not to have bought them, should the articles I wish for go cheap, I have run the risk, though contrary to my late rule, for I reckon everything much dearer now, as I have so little time left to enjoy what I purchase. I will be obliged to you if you could give Mr. White any assistance in my commission. The Duke of Bedford's book I do not expect to get. The one I wish for most you will know by the largeness of my commission. I have long thought of writing a life of René of Anjou, father of our Margaret (though I probably shall not now). And, as he was a royal painter as well as royal author, I am doubly interested about him, though I have very few *royal* passions! And they do not increase.

I forgot to tell you that I do not believe that Parliament will be dissolved—not from scruples about promises, but as it would produce infinite mischiefs at present, and probably not mend the matter by a re-election: and, if it did not, the recoil would be tremendous! In short, I hope and believe that this interlude will prove to have been only a very silly one.

Yours most cordially,

H. W.

2462. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 8, 1784.

The *Gazettes* have told you all the changes. The House of Commons is to meet on Monday, and all expectation hangs thereon. Each party promises itself—or others—the majority. I never deal in prophecies; and, not having

more *knowledge* than prophets, I shall not pretend to foretell the event, much less the consequences it will produce either way.

I have other reasons for writing to you. Cav. Mozzi's message by you, and his letter to Mr. Duane, will, I think, put an end to our arbitrage. I do not imagine that Mr. Lucas will give up the interest upon interest, at least not without such strong reluctance as will make it very difficult for me, as my Lord's nominee, to decide against him. On the other hand, I do not see how Mr. Duane, or even I, can pronounce *for* that accumulated interest, after such earnest protests of Cavalier Mozzi. My inclination, therefore, as I must, either way, give such dissatisfaction, and as the lawyers are so positive in their contradictory opinions, is to decline the arbitrage. At present we can do nothing. Lucas is in the west, looking after Lord Orford's boroughs, in case the Parliament should be dissolved. I myself have an avocation or occupation of a more melancholy kind.

My brother, Sir Edward, is, I fear, dying: yesterday we had no hopes; a sort of glimmering to-day, but scarce enough to be called a ray of hope. He has for a great number of years enjoyed perfect health, and even great beauty, without a wrinkle, to seventy-seven; but last August his decline began by an aversion to all solids. He came to town in the beginning of November; his appetite totally left him; and in a week he became a very infirm, wrinkled, old man. We think that he imagined he could cure himself by almost total abstinence. With great difficulty he was persuaded to try the bark; it restored some appetite, and then he would take no more. In a word, he has starved himself to death, and is now so emaciated and weak, that it is almost impossible he should be saved, especially as his obstinacy continues; nor will he be persuaded to take sustenance enough to give him a chance,

though he is sensible of his danger, and cool, tranquil, perfectly in his senses as ever. A cordial, a little whey, a dish of tea, it costs us all infinite pains to induce him to swallow. I much doubt whether entire tractability could save him!

I am very sorry your Swedish King[1] is so expensive to you[2]. Should he think of any return, do not be disappointed, if, on opening a weighty bale, you find nothing but a heap of copper money.

Lord Hardwicke[3] is a great oaf, both in the book he has written, and in thinking it worth being sent so far as to Florence. The ignorance in it is extreme, and so are the blunders. The fable of the late King giving my father a large sum of money towards building Houghton must have been borrowed from some vulgar pamphlet or magazine. There is not a shadow of truth in it, nor did one of the family ever hear of it. I do not mean to impeach the late King's goodness to him; but, for presents, he most assuredly never made him but two: a very large diamond, but with a great flaw in it, which Lady Mary[4] had; and, after the Queen's death, her crystal hunting-bottle, with a golden stopper and cup. I have often heard my father mention these as the only *presents*. He was too grateful and too frank to have been silent on money: nor would it have escaped the opposition, who were reduced to charge

LETTER 2462.—[1] Gustavus III. In 1783, having been advised by his physicians to spend the winter in a milder climate than Sweden, he set out in the beginning of October for Italy, and remained during the winter and ensuing spring at Pisa, Rome, Naples, Florence, and Genoa. *Walpole.*

[2] 'The King of Sweden is still here, and as he has thrown himself upon Lord Cowper and me, we go on treating him as we began. He comes to one of our houses every evening; and as that, especially on me, draws great invasions, they are very expensive as well as troublesome.' (*Mann and Manners*, vol. ii. p. 401.)

[3] Philip, second Earl of Hardwicke. The book alluded to was a collection of anecdotes respecting Sir Robert Walpole, called *Walpoliana*, printed in 4to, but not published. Lord Hardwicke died in 1790. *Walpole.*

[4] Lady Mary Churchill.

him with falsehoods, in want of truths. This pretended friend was reduced to fish in the kennels of Grub Street, to eke out his meagre anecdotes of a man whose long administration might have furnished so many; but, like his Lordship's other publications, they are all dead before him! He has all his life resembled an angler, who stands for hours and days by a river with a line and hook, and at last catches a paltry dace or bleak, which no mortal will touch.

Some events next week must produce; I perhaps shall be shut up in the house of mourning, and know little of the matter! Parliamentary debates are now so circumstantially detailed in the newspapers, that at best I could but send you extracts. Adieu!

2463. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1784.

Amid the distresses of my family I can find time to send you but few lines. My brother [1] died yesterday evening, with the same constant tranquillity which he had preserved through his whole illness. His almost unvaried health from soon after thirty to seventy-seven, his ample fortune and unambitious temper, make his life and death rather to be

Letter 2463.—[1] Sir Edward Walpole, second son of Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford, had one son and three daughters; Edward, a Colonel in the army, died young. Laura was married to Frederic Keppel, Bishop of Exeter; Maria, married first to James, second Earl of Waldegrave, and secondly to his Royal Highness William Henry, Duke of Gloucester; and Charlotte, married to Lionel Talmache, Earl of Dysart. Sir Edward Walpole had parts, wit, humour, was an excellent mimic, and was very eloquent; but being very shy, lived a retired life, and for several of his latter years scarce stirred out of his own houses. He was a very great musician, composed admirably, particularly in a melancholy or church style, and invented an instrument which he called a pentachord. He drew and painted, though seldom, but with much character, and wrote some copies of verses, a very few of which were printed; and he drew up the very pathetic and just epitaph for his son-in-law the Earl of Waldegrave in Navestock church in Essex. *Walpole.*

envied than lamented. His boundless benevolence and charity had left him but very moderate wealth, which he has given chiefly to his eldest daughter, Mrs. Keppel.

Yesterday was the mighty day of expectation in the House of Commons[2]: at six in the morning the ex-ministers had a majority of 39.

I could tell you but few or no particulars, having been shut up entirely at my brother's; and this whole morning was employed on reading his will, and other melancholy duties, till seven this evening, when I have barely time to write and send this to the Secretary's office. It was expected yesterday that the Parliament will be immediately dissolved—what the opinion is to-day, I do not at all know. I am interrupted, and must bid you good night.

2464. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 19, 1784.

I can never suspect your Ladyship of want of goodness: you would not choose a moment of tenderness for showing indifference. Indeed, though the last six days of my brother's life were most afflicting to behold, I had cause for nothing but satisfaction from the instant he expired; nor even before, could I have shut out the sight. He had passed a very long life with every enjoyment he chose, with almost equal health. He did not wish to live longer; he leaves nobody he loved in distress; he died without suffering, though his case ought

[2] After the formation of the new ministry 'an immediate dissolution was expected. . . . Pitt was determined to appeal to the electorate; but he was equally determined not to dissolve until public opinion was strongly on his side. Fox, on the other hand, was set on preventing a dissolution, and hoped to drive Pitt from office by votes of the existing House. . . . On the meeting of the Commons on Jan. 12, 1784, Fox proposed, as a means of preventing dissolution, that the House should at once go into committee on the state of the nation. In the debate Pitt loftily defended himself against charges of intriguing with the King. He was in a minority of 39.' (*D.N.B.* art. Pitt, William.)

to have been excruciating—it was beyond the power of remedy ; and his indifference, unabated firmness, his gaiety at moments within two days of his exit, and his unaffected heroism, are all subjects of consolation ; and the tranquillity of his mind enviable. Yet, I assure you, Madam, that death is so much more tiresome a thing than I had imagined, that I had far rather that mine should be extempore than philosophic. I do not like the apparatus at all, and hope I shall know no more of my going out of the world than I did of my coming into it. Life is a farce, and should not end with a mourning scene.

Lord Ossory will tell you much more than I could, Madam, of the world's bigger features. I was in the chambers of death on the *twelfth*, when the battle was fighting, which has not yet proved decisive, though the generals were so unequally matched, nor even the forces. The vanquished still hold out, though the language of the commanders is desponding enough to make their soldiers disband. The want of pay is yet more disheartening ; and the late vapour of a benevolence betrays the lowness of the military chest, which was to have raised a new army ; the thought of which is now said to be given up—at least Mr. Pitt's friends and those of the Chancellor affectedly proclaim *their* aversion to the measure, and lay all blame on *superior* obstinacy, which alone forbids Mr. Pitt's resignation ; as on the other side the whispers from the backstairs lament the latter's irresolution. I know not what foundation either have for what they give out ; nor whether both do not speak to shift off the disgrace of a defeat from themselves.

2465. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 1, 1784.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for two parcels of *Bibliothèques*, and for your very sensible and judicious letter of Jan. 16, which came in one of them. Your reasoning on poor Lord C.[1] and on our situation is perfectly just. The former has certainly been swayed against his own opinion by his son, and has betrayed a want of firmness which I have more than once perceived in his character. If charters can authorize the most shocking inhumanities that ever were exercised, not excepting those in Peru and Mexico, so far from being sacred, they would be the most execrable instruments imaginable; and Lord C. would be better founded in maintaining the charter of the Inquisition, which has to this day scarce murdered so many thousands as were swept away at once by the monopoly of rice and betel in India. Mr. Burke's speech on Mr. Fox's bill, which he has published, and which makes no impression here, touches on many other of our dreadful excesses, and will no doubt make us the horror of Europe, as we are of the Eastern world. Mr. Fox felt, and had genius enough to have put a stop to, and corrected, these crying grievances, and consequently has been rendered odious by the interested villains of the Company, and by the tools of Mr. Hastings; and is proscribed, literally and personally, by the father of his people, who became popular the moment he had *outdone his former outdoings.*

But France is going to, as you say, and no doubt will, punish our abominations—nay, I shall not be surprised if

Letter 2465.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 75–82.

[1] Lord Camden.

the present inundation of zeal should ensure punishment to this country itself, and its posterity, and should think the sacrifice of our liberties not too great a compliment in return for the dismission of the coalition. The Church, the old women, and the country gentlemen (who, as I have often heard you say justly, would like despotism, provided they could be assured of a low land tax, a good price for corn, and the Game Act) are all running headlong to support good King Charles the First; and the immaculate Master Billy[2] has already taken a giant's step toward imitation of Lord Strafford: yet, finding that the torrent of words which he inherited cannot combat Mr. Fox's invincible powers of reasoning, and that equivocation was still less a match for them, he has prudently adopted an arrogant sullenness, and literally finds that contemptuous silence will govern the House of Commons better than paying court to them. Indeed, he does not omit more solid methods. *Three* Scotch dukes were yesterday made peers of England to purchase only *four* votes for to-morrow! You will say 'a very dear bargain indeed!' and will perhaps conclude that there is a little want of specie, when paper and parchment are substituted at such high rates. It may be so; but at least it shows how large the object is, and how desperate the resolution of not being foiled!

It is true that, on the other hand, there is all the good sense of both Houses of Parliament—excepting the Chancellor, Lord Gower, Pepper Arden[3], the Duke of Richmond, and the premature boy's parts, such as they are. Nothing is so despicable as the rest of the administration, of which you have a sample before your eyes. Nay, in those I have quoted I do not believe you will discover much of solid

[2] William Pitt.

[3] Richard Pepper Arden (1745–1804), afterwards first Lord Alvanley. He was at this time Attorney-General.

abilities. There is not the least knowledge of the world in any but the second, and he knows nothing else. Nor has he or the Chancellor any true courage—the latter a real bully. The Duke has just that sort of spirit that involves him in scrapes with more facility than it extricates him. On his being enrolled of the Cabinet a few days ago, G. Selwyn, though of the same side, said, 'Why, it is turning a monkey into a china-shop, to break everything to pieces.'

Upon the whole, the best that I expect is that there will be a strong, manly opposition remaining (if they are beaten to-morrow, as I apprehend, or as I conclude they will be soon), who will be able to prevent some mischief, and may, as happened at last in the American war, force (in concert with the blunders and misfortunes that will be committed) the nation to open its unwilling eyes. But that time I probably shall not live to see. Nor will it avail when it comes. We shall be undone before that moment arrives! Mr. Fox, the only man upon earth who could have restored us to any tolerable state, and who has displayed as consummate temper as genius, is not allowed to save us while the opportunity was within our reach.

You are very obliging in offering to execute commissions for me: but, excepting the *Bibliothèques* and the *Voyage de Grèce*, I will not trouble you. I must be more economic now than formerly. I have lost 1,400*l.* a year by my brother's death, the foresight of which made me recall my commissions at the Duc de la Valière's sale. My place at the Exchequer is much sunk too, by our reforms and the Peace—and what worse may happen, who can tell? All I do know is that, having kept myself (without ambitious views) as incorrupt as the *immaculate* idol of the moment, I will not disgrace the small remains of life. I do not mean that a high price would be offered for so insignificant

man as I am. But, when such a dumb beggar as Mr. Carteret, and such a poltroon as his brother Weymouth, are thought worth a second peerage, who needs despair that wished to sell himself? I do feel your position sensibly: and it is one of the few points which would make me desire what I never shall have, power, that I might be useful to you and your family. In fact, I question whether any man will long have opportunities of serving anybody. No, the French do not overrate our folly; it is *au comble*! it is as great as they could wish! and Mr. Pitt's ambition lending itself to the ——'s[4] views, will revenge France for the mortifications which she received from his father Chatham.

3rd.—The three Scotch baronies are now denied; yet I don't quite disbelieve at least two of them. Mr. Fox last night recovered a majority of nineteen, and has by his temper and address gained several of *the country gentlemen* from Mr. Pitt. Yet we are far from any settlement, but expect further obstinacy from *the Park*, and hostile counter-resolutions from the Lords. Your son, whom I expect every minute, as he talked of setting out to-morrow, must explain details, for which I have not time. Adieu! dear Sir. You may guess more easily than I can describe our situation. Even private life is grown unpleasant from the violent divisions sown in families, friendships, connections —in that art we have an able master.

2466. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 2, 1784.

As your nephew tells me that he sends you punctual accounts of our politics, I shall say nothing on them. I do not know how he contrives to give you a clear idea of them, so fluctuating and uncertain they are. Once or twice a week

[4] The King's.

there is a day which it is said will be decisive[1]. *To-day* is in that number; yet I expect it so little, that I am writing to you at ten at night, without inquiring whether the House of Commons, where action was expected, is up; without knowing what was to be there.

My reason for writing is to tell Cav. Mozzi, through you, that Lucas is returned to town at last, and was with me this morning along with Messrs. Duane and Sharpe. I then acquainted them, as I had resolved, that Mr. Sharpe, having received from the Cavalier, and I from you, the strongest remonstrances against the *injustice criante* of allowing my Lord interest upon interest, and Mr. Lucas adhering to the demand, I did not see how Mr. Duane and I could proceed any farther as referees; as, to decide on either side must discontent the other; whereas our business was to accord them as amicably as we could, consistently with equity. Mr. Duane then declared against the legality of interest on interest. I said, if it was illegal, it was not a point on which we *could* decide, but ought to be left to lawyers; and that it would be better to name two new lawyers, one on each side; and, if they disagreed, to call in a third who should pronounce decisively. Mr. Duane was warm against that; said the whole cause must be gone over again, and would not end in years. He was for offering my Lord 600*l.* out of 2,431*l.* demanded by Lucas, who on the other hand offered to abate 1,000*l.* Neither would come into the proposal of the other. At last, after many words, I hit on this expedient—that the 5,457*l.*, which we had all agreed my Lord should receive as a compromise of the demands of both parties (and which yet Lucas persists in calling a very

LETTER 2466.—[1] This was occasioned by the Opposition having the majority in the House of Commons, and by the King's supporting Mr. Pitt against that majority, who having too much decency to stop the supplies, and having no charge to make against Mr. Pitt, who had not had time to do any act, they could not force the King to remove him. *Walpole.*

liberal concession on my Lord's part, not, I believe, because strictly just, but he having all the proofs in his hands, and Mr. Sharpe few or none but what Lucas pleased to give him), I proposed, I say, that Mr. Duane and I should decide that sum to my Lord, and then that my Lord and the Cavalier should settle as they could the demand of 2,431*l.* Mr. Duane and Mr. Sharpe were much pleased with this expedient. Lucas did not like it so well, but could urge nothing material against it. On that issue we left it for the present. Lucas is to write to my Lord, and Mr. Sharpe to Mozzi, who will now know what he likes to do, and how much of the 2,431*l.* he will sacrifice for a termination. He may take what time he will to consider on it, or what measures he pleases to obtain as much as he can. Do not let him answer hastily or inconsiderately. If he is impatient to finish, I believe Lucas is as eager to finger the money for my Lord. The more patient will have the advantage. As I believe the demand exorbitant, if not totally unjust, I cannot help saying that I should think Mozzi had better offer but little at first, which may make Lucas at last accept less than he would if the offer were considerable. A delay cannot make much addition to the time already lost; and whatever he recovers by this new contestation will pay him for losing two or three months more.

I have thus done all that was possible for me to do in my situation. Thinking my party in the wrong in general, though perhaps not wholly (as it does seem that my Lady had appropriated some things to herself to which she had no right), I have preferred justice to partiality towards the person for whom I acted; and as I avowed to Lucas to-day, I have contradicted him throughout whenever I knew (by my own acquaintance with the affairs of the family) that he urged what was not true or matter of fact: for instance, in the case of Lady Orford's jewels, the chief of which I

remembered my brother had retained when she went abroad. Still, I dare to say that, besides displeasing my Lord and Lucas, I shall not have answered Cav. Mozzi's expectations. I can only say to that, that when I have submitted, I have been guided by Mr. Duane, and never allowed but what he said ought to be allowed—and yet I assure you he has not flinched a jot when he thought Lucas unreasonable. Mr. Sharpe has said less, but has been against the interest on interest.

Upon the whole, I am still of opinion that had Cav. Mozzi come over when I advised him, he would have fared better —but that is past.

You, my dear Sir, will be as tired as I am of this tedious affair; but your goodness to poor Mozzi will make you excuse it. I could not possibly have explained myself to him in Italian, nor even in French; he is lucky that I could not in terms of law, which even you could not have translated into Italian, nor perhaps into sense. Adieu! I am quite fatigued, having been writing another letter on business.

P.S. I have received and thank you for the two prints of old Cosimo's Duchess; and I thank you for telling me the price of the *Fatti Farnesiani*, which I shall pay directly to Mr. Croft; I have been so hurried by my brother's death, that I forgot it till just now on reading your last of Jan. 10th again.

2467. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 2, 1784.

I THANK you for your condolence on the death of my brother, and on the considerable diminution of my own

LETTER 2467.—Collated (with exception of P.S.) with copy in Horace Walpole's hand, marked 'My answer to the Rev. William Mason,' in possession of the late Sir T. V. Lister.

fortune, though neither are events to which I am not perfectly reconciled. My brother was seventy-seven, had enjoyed perfect health and senses to that age, did not even begin to break till last August, suffered no pain, saw death advance gradually though fast, with the coolest tranquillity, did not even wish to live longer, and died both with indifference and without affectation; is that a termination to lament?

I do lose fourteen hundred a year by his death, but had I reason to expect to keep it so long? I had twice been offered the reversion for my own life, and positively refused to accept it, because I would receive no obligation that might entangle my honour and my gratitude, and set them at variance. I never did ask or receive a personal favour from my most intimate friends when in power, though they were too upright to have laid me under the same difficulties, and have always acted an honest uniform part; but though I love expense, I was content with a fortune far above any merit I can pretend to, and knew I should be content were it much lessened. As it would be contemptible to regret the diminution at sixty-six, there is no merit in being quite easy under the loss. But you do me honour I do not deserve in complimenting me on not loving money. I have always loved what money would purchase, which is much the same thing; and the whole of my philosophy consists in reconciling myself to buying fewer baubles for a year or two that I may live, and when the old child's baby-house is quite full of playthings.

I am surprised that you expected me to take notice of Lord Harcourt's turning courtier. It did not astonish me in the least, as I have known for near two years that such an event was by no means improbable, and did myself try to contribute to it when I thought it not at all irreconcileable with his former conduct. Nor do I wonder at your

announcing in effect the same of yourself. Were I surprised, I should contradict one of my own maxims which I have scarce or never known to fail, and which is, that men are always most angry with those with whom they quarrel last, which generally produces reconciliations between those whose hatreds agree *in eodem tertio*. But in truth I concern myself with no man's politics but my own; first, because I have no more right to dictate to others, than I will allow anybody to dictate to me; and secondly, because I can see into no heart but my own, nor know its real motives of action. My own point has been to be consistent ever since I first thought on politics, which was five-and-forty years ago, and I feel a satisfaction in having been so steady, because it seems to me if I do not deceive or flatter myself, that it is a proof that I have acted on principle and not from disappointment, resentment, passion, interest, or fickleness.

It made me smile indeed when I heard that Lord Harcourt on his change had given away his ring of Brutus to Lady Jersey's little boy; because I do not see how anything that has happened within this twelvemonth has affected the character of Brutus, who died seventeen hundred years before the coalition was thought on; I am glad however that if I change I may keep my Caligula without committing treason.

Your distinction of the *crown's friends* is, I own, too theologic a refinement for my simple understanding, who never conceived a confusion of two natures in one person, yet still remaining separate; nor in human affairs should I comprehend why a Pope's disgracing himself as a gentleman by the meanest duplicity should make one fall in love with his tiara. Do you think I should accept for sound reasoning if you were capable of telling me, that though you vowed in a sermon that you would never be a bishop,

yet your gown being distinct from you, you could see no reason why your gown might not be turned into lawn sleeves?

What miracles the new set of men that are to arise are to achieve, I neither know nor care; I shall be out of the question before that blessed millennium arrives, unless they are already come, as perhaps they are, and for that too I cannot have long to care; though I firmly believe that your *new set* will only effect what has often been tried before, and what you say *ought* to be tried, i. e. to prove themselves the *crown's friends*—an act of loyalty which I dare to say the wearer will be the first to pardon.

You see by my using the same liberality of correspondence I approve of yours. I am above disguising my sentiments, and am too low for any man to disguise his to me. Mine indeed having no variety in them, must be less entertaining, and therefore, unless I take a freak of hobbling to court, you can have no curiosity to hear them, nor should I have mentioned them now, but that I thought it respectful to you, and candid when you communicated your *new* sentiments to me, to tell you that mine remained unaltered.

I cannot imagine why you think that I shall not like your tragedy; am I apt to dislike your writings? Though I am too sincere to flatter you when I think you unequal to yourself, I did reckon that I was one who had taste enough to be sensible to the utmost of the beauties of your capital works—and tragedy is certainly not a walk in which I can believe you will miss your way; you have trodden more difficult paths with the happiest facility. I shall be glad to see your piece when you will indulge me with it,

And am yours ever,

HORACE WALPOLE[1].

[1] A coolness followed the dispatch of this letter, and all communication between Walpole and Mason ceased until a few months previous to the

P.S. Mr. Jerningham has just published a new poem on the doctrines of the Scandinavian bards. It is far superior

death of the former. Two accounts of this quarrel are extant; the first (printed from the original paper in Horace Walpole's handwriting) appeared in the *Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry* (vol. ii. p. 39); the second, from Pinkerton's *Walpoliana* (pp. 91–5), is as follows:—'I shall tell you a great secret, the cause of my late difference with Mr. Mason. Lord Harcourt, Mason, and I, used often to meet together, as we cordially agreed in our sentiments of the public measures pursued during this reign. But when the India Bill of Fox came to be agitated, Mason took a decided part against it: nay, wrote to me that upon this occasion every one ought to assist the King; and warmly recommended it to me to use my influence in that cause.

'You may imagine I was a little surprised at this new style of my old friend, and the impertinence of giving his advice unasked. I returned a light, ironical answer. As Mason had, in a sermon preached before the Archbishop of York, publicly declared that he would not accept of a bishopric, if offered to him, I jeeringly told him that I supposed his antipathy to a bishopric had subsided. He being also the first promoter of the York Associations (which I never approved), I added that I supposed he intended to use that fool Wyvill as a tool of popularity. For Wyvill is so stupid that he cannot even write English; and the first York Association paper, which is written by Wyvill, is neither sense nor grammar.

'To return to Lord Harcourt. He was so obnoxious to the court that, when his mother lately died, the Queen did not send a message to the Countess, to say that she would call on her; though this be always done in etiquette to a countess, and as constantly refused. In consequence Lord and Lady Harcourt never went near the court. But when Fox's India Bill came to the House of Lords, Lord Harcourt, probably by Mason's suggestions, remained to the very last of the question, and much distinguished himself against it. The consequence was, that, a few days after, Lord Harcourt called on me, to say that the King had sent him a message, requesting his acceptance of the embassy to Spain: and he concluded with begging my advice on the occasion. I told him at once that, since the King had sent such a message, I thought it was in fact begging pardon: "and, my lord, I think you must go to court, and return thanks for the offer, *as you do not accept it.*" But lo and behold! in a day or two Lady Harcourt was made Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen; and Lord Harcourt was constantly dangling in the Drawing-room.

'Soon after Mason, in another letter, asked me what I thought of Lord Harcourt's becoming such a courtier, &c. I was really shocked to see a man, who had professed so much, treat such a matter so lightly; and returned a pretty severe answer. Among other matters, I said ironically, that, since Lord Harcourt had given his cap-and-dagger ring to little master, he (Mason) need no longer wonder at my love for my bust of Caligula. For Lord Harcourt used formerly always to wear a seal-ring, with the cap of liberty between two daggers, when he went to court: but he gave it to a little boy upon his change. And I, though a warm friend of republicanism, have a small bust of Caligula in bronze, much admired for its fine workmanship.

'The consequence of these differences has been, that we call on each other, but are on the coldest terms.

'I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Mason, in his latter epistle to me, condoled with me on the death of my brother, by which I lost 1,400*l.* a year. In my answer I told him

to his other works. The versification is good; very many expressions and lines beautiful, and the whole nervous and not like his uniform turtle ditties. It might have been thrown into a better plan; and it ends rather abruptly and tamely. He seems to have kept the *Descent of Odin* in his eye, though he had not the art of conjuring up the most forceful feelings, as Gray has done, in a subject in which there is so much of the terrible. Though one has scarce any idea of what the whole is about, yet one is enwrapt by it—as one is delighted with the *Flower and Leaf*, though a mere description of ladies in white velvet and green satin set with rubies and emeralds, and holding wands of *agnus castus*.

2468. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 6, 1784.

I am very sorry, Madam, to have occasion so soon to return your Ladyship's kind condolence on my brother's death. It is more difficult to speak on your loss[1], though I am persuaded you feel it more sensibly than I did mine, who was prepared for it, and saw it so gradual and so little grievous to himself, that I admired more than lamented. Yet your Ladyship, I hope, will have a consolation that I could not receive: I do not mean in point of fortune, though as you have children, you cannot be indifferent to a great accession, as the town says you are likely to have, and which I most sincerely wish; but in reality you will, instead of losing a parent, I trust, recover one[2]. *That* I most heartily hope

there was no room for condolence in the affair, my brother having attained the age of seventy-seven; and I myself being an old man of sixty-eight, so that it was time for the old child to give over buying of baubles. I added that Mr. Mason well knew that the place had been twice offered to me for my own life, but I had refused, and left it on the old footing of my brother's.'

Letter 2468.—[1] Lady Ossory's father, Henry Liddell, first Baron Ravensworth, died on Jan. 30, 1784.

[2] Lady Ossory was reconciled to her mother after her father's death.

will happen both for your sake and hers! But it is not proper to say more; yet I could not help telling you how much I have considered your present position under all its phases, and having done so I will mix nothing else with it; though without any Pindaric transition, one might easily slide into a variety of reflections, which, however foreign to the theme, would be all serious.

Your Ladyship's most devoted.

2469. To the Rev. William Mason.

You must blame yourself, not me, if you are displeased with my letters, which you forced from me. I had done all I could, both by silence, and by more than once or twice declaring I did not choose to write on politics, to avoid any political discussions with you. I could not be ignorant of Lord Harcourt's conversion, which for a moment had so much diverted the town, but I did not take the liberty to mention it to him. On the contrary, when he consulted me on going to court, which I knew he had determined to do, on being offered the embassy to Spain, I told him I thought civility ought to be returned by respect. Neither was I quite ignorant of your change of sentiments; yet should never have uttered a syllable to you on that occasion, had you not chosen to notify it to me. Then I most certainly had an equal right to declare that my principles were not changed,—especially not by a circumstance, serious indeed in itself, but ludicrous if it had produced such an effect on me as to make me think the power of the crown was diminished, was diminishing, and ought to be increased, because its (not secret, but open) influence had been used to force Lords of the Bedchamber, and even the holy head

Letter 2469.—Not included in the Walpole and Mason Correspondence, and possibly not sent; evidently written about the same time as the letter to Mason of Feb. 2, 1784.

of our Church, to sacrifice his conscience, duty, and opinion to his gratitude,—an example that tells me how much I have been in the right never to involve myself in such terrible obligations! *Ought* did not become you or me.

I am so far from being hurt at your quarrelling with me, that I thank you extremely for it, and still so cordially wish you whatever you may wish for yourself, that I should delight in seeing you Archbishop of York; for as you are excellent at distinctions, you can certainly discern the difference between an archbishop and a bishop, as easily as between a king and his crown. I am, Sir, with due regard and esteem,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

H. W.

P.S. I have for five-and-forty years acted upon the principles of the constitution, as it was settled at the Revolution, the best form of government that I know of in the world, and which made us a free people, a rich people, and a victorious people, by diffusing liberty, protecting property, and encouraging commerce; and by the combination of all, empowering us to resist the ambition of the house of Bourbon, and to place ourselves on a level with that formidable neighbour. The narrow plan of royalty, which had so often preferred the aggrandizement of the crown to the dignity of presiding over a great and puissant free kingdom, threw away one predominant source of our potency by aspiring to enslave America, and would now compensate for the blunder and its consequences by assuming a despotic power at home. It has found a tool in the light and juvenile son[1] of the great minister who carried our glory to its highest pitch. But it shall never have the insignificant approbation of an old and worn-out son of another minister[2],

[1] William Pitt the younger. [2] Sir Robert Walpole.

who, though less brilliantly, maintained this country in the enjoyment of the twenty happiest years that England ever enjoyed. Your pert and ignorant cabal at York, picking up factious slander from party libels, stigmatized that excellent man as the patron of corruption, though all his views and all his notions tended to nothing but to preserve the present family on the throne, and the nation in peace and affluence. Your own blind ambition of being the head of a party, which had no precise system in view, has made you embrace every partial sound which you took for popularity; and being enraged at every man who would not be dictated to by your crude visions, you have floundered into a thousand absurdities; and, though you set out with pretending to reform Parliament, in order to lower the influence of the crown, you have plunged into the most preposterous support of prerogative, because Lord North, then the crown minister, declared against your innovations, and has since fallen into disgrace with the King. I am not so little rooted in my principles as to imitate or co-operate with you. I am going out of the world, and am determined to die as I have lived—*consistent.* You are not much younger than I am, and ought to have acted a more temperate and rational part;—but that is no business of mine.

2470. To Sir Horace Mann.

March 12, 1784.

Your nephew sends you such regular accounts from the fountain-head, the House of Commons, that I could only retail them more imperfectly. As it will not be long before you see him, you will understand our state of politics better by question and answer, than from maimed or partial relations. The present face of things looks like a suspension of arms—not a truce; much less has your half-

nephew[1] succeeded in his endeavours to negotiate an accommodation. The opposition acquiesce in raising the supplies; and, consequently, the rest of the session is not likely to be tempestuous, as it has been.

You may be sure that *I* approve of your nephew's intention of withdrawing from Parliament. As I have never for one moment regretted my own retirement from that disagreeable occupation, I cannot wonder at another's being sick of it. Ambition, vanity, and interest may reconcile one to acting a part in their theatre; but where *they* are weak motives, or not existent, how many are there to disgust!

You perceive that I have received yours of Feb. 14th, and the news of Florence in it, which require no answer. Nor have I any to send you in return. Politics have engrossed all conversation, and stifled other events, if any have happened. Thus, I find it difficult to be so punctual as I was wont, or to fill a decent sheet when I do write. Indeed, our ladies who used to contribute to enliven correspondence, are become politicians, and, as Lady Townley says, 'squeeze a little too much lemon into conversation.' They have been called back a little to their own profession—dress—by a magnificent ball which the Prince of Wales gave two nights ago to near six hundred persons, to which the Amazons of both parties were invited; and not a scratch was given or received!

I am impatient for Cav. Mozzi's answer to Mr. Sharpe's letter. The one you sent me from the former came too late; and, though he mentions the distress that delay would

LETTER 2470.—[1] Mr. Powis, member for Northamptonshire, who had married the sister of the younger Sir Horace Mann, endeavoured at this time to bring about a junction between Mr. Pitt and the opposition, which neither side desired, and which of course failed—yet the opposition had the address to shift the miscarriage on Mr. Pitt, who in consequence lost the goodwill of Mr. Powis, who had great weight by seeming impartiality, yet with most inclination to Pitt, who at the ensuing general election behaved to him with complete duplicity. *Walpole.*

occasion to him by his probably missing the opportunity of buying into the French funds, it was impossible for me to go back. I had avoided the inconvenience of throwing up the refereeship, by the sole expedient of deciding all but the interest on interest, and leaving that to be accommodated by the parties themselves, on which it was impossible for me to pronounce, unless by allowing it to my Lord, which I both thought unjust, and which Cav. Mozzi himself had *almost absolutely* forbidden me to grant—I say *almost*, for, though not *positively*, he had represented so strongly against it, that, concurring with mine and Mr. Sharpe's sentiments, I could not think myself at liberty to comply; and indeed, if I had, Mr. Duane and I should, after so long a suspense, have been of very little use, as Lucas would have obtained very near all he demanded in the most unbounded manner at first. I have, I am persuaded, offended my Lord much, and do not doubt but that Lucas will have insinuated that I have given his Lordship full excuse for *doing any act* to my prejudice; but I laugh at that.—I am neither fool enough to expect to outlive him, nor care, if I should, whether he totally disinherits me, as I conclude he would. I will not pay the smallest degree of court to him, but rather less, if less could be, since I am become his next heir. I will not owe even what my birth would entitle to, to any insincerity. Judge, then, whether I should not be hurt, if Cav. Mozzi should suspect me of having acted with any partiality. I doubt whether I have not shown too much on *his* behalf, though I have often checked myself when I perceived it; for indignation at the treatment of him, resentment on other accounts to his adversaries, and even the vanity, the ostentatious vanity of acting uprightly, may, and I really believe have, biased my inclinations *against* the party *for* whom I was employed:—but then, I have really done nothing but by Mr. Duane's advice; and by his advice

have allowed much more to my Lord than I ever believed he had a right to; and which, if he had behaved handsomely, and not been guided by Lucas, he would not have claimed, whatever his pretensions were.

I beg your pardon for dwelling so much on this tedious affair. You will soon, I trust, hear no more of it.

2471. To George Hardinge.

March 23, 1784.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for the very pretty print[1] you have sent me; but I cannot afford to hang it up, as it will be too great an acquisition to my volume of portraits. I am very sorry you can give me no better an account of the original. I have had a very slight fit of gout this winter, but I have got a very bad cold, and so troublesome a cough, that I am in hopes the air of so charming a season will remove it; and I am come hither for a few days to try it in its purity, not but that I think it very possible that a cough may be only the wind rattling through

The chinks that time has made,

and I shall be persuaded so if it is not cured soon.—Are not you very glad of Miss Beauclerc's[2] marriage?

H. Walpole.

2472. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 26, 1784.

The dissolution of Parliament, a manœuvre so long upon the anvil, and so often intermitted, has at last taken place.

Letter 2471.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Illustrations of Literary History*, vol. iii. p. 216.

[1] An etching from a drawing of Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chancellor in the reign of Henry VI.

[2] Apparently Mary, eldest daughter of Lady Diana Beauclerk. She married (as his second wife) Francis Jenison (1764–1824), Count Jenison Walworth, in the Hessian military service.

The King went to the House on Wednesday, and in few words declared his intention;—a strange event interrupted the blow for a moment. In the preceding night, some thieves had broken into the Chancellor's house, and stolen the Great Seal! The hubbub it occasioned for some hours was prodigious; but, as forms and ceremonies are not quite so awful as before time was arrived at years of discretion, a cast was taken off, and served for the death-warrant of the House of Commons last night. In truth there does not seem to remain any terror in solemnity, when housebreakers make free with the head of the law himself. I doubt that, for a month or six weeks to come, one shall have additional occasion to keep watch and ward. All the island will be a scene of riot, and probably of violence. The parties are not separated in gentle mood: there will, they say, be contested elections everywhere; consequently, vast expense and animosities. The court, it is believed, will have the majority in the new Parliament. As your nephew does not intend to be of it, you will, I conclude, see him soon; but he is out of town, and I know nothing of him. I only write now just to mark the crisis, though to-morrow's papers would have notified the event; but you love, now and then, to have the confirmation from me. I have not received from you that of the Pretender's death [1], though it has been public here this fortnight. I do not mean that I cared a straw about it; and perhaps you thought you had mentioned it. Does his brother mean to encircle his hat with a diadem, like old King Henry of Portugal [2]; or rather more like the imaginary Charles the Tenth [3] of France, the puppet of the League?

LETTER 2472.—[1] This proved to be erroneous. He had, however, been given over, and had received extreme unction. *Walpole.*

[2] Cardinal Henry, uncle and successor of Don Sebastian. *Walpole.*

[3] The Cardinal of Bourbon, uncle of Henry IV of France, proclaimed king by the name of Charles X by the League, though a prisoner to his nephew; in which confinement he died. *Walpole.*

I have not only not heard from you on the part of Mozzi, but not a word from Sharpe; and, therefore, I conclude no answer is come.

We have no private news at all. Indeed, politics are all in all. I question whether any woman intrigues with a man of a different party. Little girls say, 'Pray, Miss, of which side are you?' I heard of one that said, 'Mama and I cannot get papa over to our side!'

The weather is as violent as our contests. Though the winter was so long and severe, we had snow two days ago, and have again to-day; yet our calamities are trifling to what we hear from the continent: from Germany, destruction of bridges by inundations; and still more dreadful from Holland. Well! politics and tempests are important in their day, and then sink into the mass of events, and lose their striking characteristics—the sufferings of individuals. I have lived so long, and have seen such a succession of both kinds of convulsions, that they make little more impression on me than the scenes of a play.

To the present drama, elections, I shall totally shut my ears. Such subjects as, however noisy, one is sure to hear of no more the moment they are over, are to me insupportable. I hated elections forty years ago; and, when I went to White's, preferred a conversation on Newmarket to one on elections: for the language of the former I did not understand, and, consequently, did not listen to; the other, being uttered in common phrase, made me attend, whether I would or not. When such subjects are on the tapis, they make me a very insipid correspondent. One cannot talk of what one does not care about; and it would be jargon to you, if I did: however, do not imagine but I allow a sufficient quantity of dullness to my time of life. I have kept up a correspondence with you with tolerable spirit for three-and-forty years together, without our once meeting. Can

you wonder that my pen is worn to the stump? You see it does not abandon you; nor, though conscious of its own decay, endeavour to veil it by silence. The Archbishop of *Gil Blas* has long been a lesson to me to watch over my own ruins; but I do not extend that jealousy of vanity to commerce with an old friend. You knew me in my days of folly and riotous spirits; why should I hide my dotage from you, which is not equally my fault and reproach? I take due care that nobody should hear of me but two or three, who persuade me that I still live in their memories; by the rest I had rather be forgotten.

2473. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1784.

As I expect your nephew in town previously to his setting out for Florence, and as his residence, I conclude, from his having let his house in London, will be very short, I prepare a letter to send by him, lest I should not have time to write it leisurely when he comes, and is departing again instantly.

My letters, since the great change in the administration, have been rare, and much less informing than they used to be. In a word, I was not at all glad of the revolution, nor have the smallest connection with the new occupants. There has been a good deal of boldness on both sides. Mr. Fox, convinced of the necessity of hardy measures to correct and save India, and coupling with that rough medicine a desire of confirming the power of himself and his allies, had formed a great system, and a very sagacious one; so sagacious, that it struck France with terror. But as the new power was to be founded on the demolition of that nest of monsters, the East [India] Company, and their spawn of nabobs, &c., they took the alarm; and the secret junto at court rejoiced that they did. The court struck the

blow at the ministers; but it was the gold of the Company that really conjured up the storm, and has diffused it all over England.

On the other hand, Mr. Pitt has braved the majority of the House of Commons, has dissolved the existent one, and, I doubt, given a wound to that branch of the legislature, which, if the tide does not turn, may be very fatal to the constitution. The nation is intoxicated, and has poured in addresses of thanks to the crown for exerting the prerogative *against* the palladium of the people. The first consequence will probably be that the court will have a considerable majority upon the new elections. The country has acted with such precipitation, and with so little knowledge of the question, that I do not doubt but thousands of eyes will be opened and wonder at themselves; but the mischief will be done! But, without talking of futurity and constitutional points, you may easily judge what detriment the nation must have received already. The first year after a war—and after so fatal a war!—was the moment to set about repairing what could be repaired. *That* year is already lost, totally lost! not a measure has been taken yet; and it will be the end of May before even the session can begin. Unanimity, too, was essential; instead of which, behold two parties revived with as much animosity as ever actuated factions, except in religious wars! It was deemed of the last urgency that the East India Bill should have gone by the ships in February! not a bill is yet in the egg-shell. The Cabinet of Versailles speak their opinion plainly, by being zealous for Mr. Pitt; a sad compliment to him! And they are sending a powerful fleet to India, accompanied by Spaniards and Dutch. Guess how near we are to peace with Holland! Add to all these difficulties the incapacity of the new ministers. Mr. Pitt is certainly an extraordinary young man; but is he a supernatural one? Do

not trust to me, but believe the foreign ministers. There is but one voice amongst them on the marvellous superiority of Mr. Fox, and the unheard-of facility of doing business with him. *He* made the peace between the Turks and Russia; and Simonin, the latter's minister, told the King himself so in the Drawing-room since Fox's fall. On the contrary, those foreigners talk loudly of the extreme ignorance of the new Secretaries. Our Ambassador at Paris[1] is a proverb of insufficience. Lord Shelburne (who, by the way, seems likely to succeed one of his successors, Lord Sydney[2]) said the other day, 'Upon my word, I hear that the Duke of Dorset's letters are written very well; he talks of the ceded islands as if he knew where they are.'

This is a brief sketch of part of our history; for particulars, I refer myself to your nephew. Pray send me back this letter by him and the preceding parcel. You, with whom I have conversed so freely for above forty years, could not want a clue to my sentiments on the present crisis. I never have changed my principles, nor am likely. I shall continue to write to you on great events, but without comments, which would be unnecessary after I have given you this key.

In a general view, I suppose we shall fall into all the distractions of a ruined country. The memory of what we have been so recently will exasperate our feelings; or we shall grow insensible, remain dissipated till totally impoverished, and perhaps imagine from indolence that submission is ease! I am so near the end of my course, that I bear these uncomfortable prospects with more indifference than I should have done some years ago. I take no part; for, when boys are on the stage, a veteran makes but an awkward figure: nor can I tap a new controversy, of which I shall probably see but little of the progress. Methinks

LETTER 2473. — [1] The Duke of Dorset. [2] Home Secretary; he continued in office till 1789.

one ought to be ready to go at one's time, and not be called away when one has much to do. I was enough engaged when the former Pitt[3] and Fox were the heroes of the scene. Were I to list under the son of the one or the other, I should feel as if I were reading the romance of *Amadis de Gaul*, which continues through the adventures of his son.

April 11th.

I hear nothing of your nephew, nor know where to inquire; yet, as he has parted with his house in town and abandoned his borough[4], I conclude he perseveres in his intention of visiting you, and that I shall see him before he sets out.

The scene is wofully changed for the opposition, though not half the new Parliament is yet chosen. Though they still contest a very few counties and some boroughs, they own themselves totally defeated. They reckon themselves sure of two hundred and forty members: they probably will not have an hundred and fifty; and, amongst them, not some capital leaders—perhaps not the Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Fox[5], certainly not the late Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Conway[6]. In short, between the industry of the court and the India Company, and that momentary frenzy that sometimes seizes a whole nation, as if it were a vast animal, such aversion to the coalition and such a detestation of Mr. Fox have seized the country, that, even where omnipotent gold retains its influence, the elected pass through an ordeal of the most virulent abuse. The

[3] Mr. Pitt was second son of William, Earl of Chatham, who was also a second son; as Charles Fox was of Lord Holland, a second son also. *Walpole.*

[4] Maidstone, which the younger Sir Horace Mann represented in the previous Parliament.

[5] Though Mr. Fox was elected both for Westminster and Kirkwall, petitions from both were presented against him. *Walpole.*

[6] General Conway did not seek re-election. He now withdrew entirely from political life.

great Whig families, the Cavendishes, Rockinghams, Bedfords, have lost all credit in their own counties; nay, have been tricked out of seats where the whole property was their own: and in some of those cases a *royal* finger has too evidently tampered, as well as singularly and revengefully towards Lord North and Lord Hertford; the latter of whom, however, is likely to have six of his own sons[7] in the House of Commons—an extraordinary instance. Such a proscription, however, must have sown so deep resentment as it was not wise to provoke; considering that permanent fortune is a jewel that in no crown is the most to be depended upon!

When I have told you these certain truths, and when you must be aware that this torrent of unpopularity broke out in the capital, will it not sound like a contradiction if I affirm that Mr. Fox himself is still struggling to be chosen for Westminster, and maintains so sturdy a fight, that Sir Cecil Wray, his antagonist, is not yet three hundred ahead of him, though the court exerts itself against him in the most violent manner, by mandates, arts, &c.—nay, sent at once a body of two hundred and eighty of the Guards to give their votes as householders, which *is* legal, but which my father in the most quiet seasons would not have dared to do? At first, the contest threatened to be bloody: Lord Hood[8] being the third candidate, and on the side of the court, a mob of three hundred sailors undertook to drive away the opponents; but the Irish chairmen[9], being retained by Mr. Fox's party, drove them back to their element and cured the tars of their ambition of a naval victory. In truth, Mr. Fox has all the popularity in Westminster; and, indeed, is so amiable and winning, that, could he have

[7] He did get but five of his sons into that Parliament. *Walpole.*

[8] Lord Hood was an admiral. *Walpole.*

[9] Almost all the hackney chairmen in London were Irish. *Walpole.*

stood in person all over England, I question whether he would not have carried the Parliament. The beldams hate him; but most of the pretty women in London are indefatigable in making interest for him, the Duchess of Devonshire[10] in particular. I am ashamed to say how coarsely she has been received by some worse than tars!—But me nothing has shocked so much as what I heard this morning: at Dover they roasted a poor *fox* alive by the most diabolic allegory!—a savage meanness that an Iroquois would not have committed. Base, cowardly wretches! how much nobler to have hurried to London and torn Mr. Fox himself piecemeal! I detest a country inhabited by such stupid barbarians. I will write no more to-night; I am in a passion!

April 15th, at night.

Your nephew has been in town for a moment, and called on me; but hurried into Kent, apprehending an opposition to his friend, Mr. Marsham: but Lord Mahon, a savage, a republican, a royalist—I don't know what not—has been forced to drop it; and your nephew will set out immediately, and sends for this letter, which I must finish in haste. I can add nothing newly decisive. The court will have a great majority; but the tide, at least here, begins to turn. They did not carry a supply of six new Directors of the East India Company swimmingly yesterday: Mr. Fox was within two or three voices of choosing three of those very friends who were to have been members of his bill, which proves that he has still great weight among the proprietors. His own election for Westminster still continues, and he has recovered much ground within these

[10] Lady Georgiana Spencer. She certainly procured the greatest part of Mr. Fox's votes for him: though the court party endeavoured to deter her by the most illiberal and indecent abuse, yet could not fix the smallest stain on her virtue. *Walpole.*

three days, so that Sir Cecil Wray's majority of above 300 is reduced to 175.

The aspect in Ireland is cloudy; nay, has been stormy. The mob broke into the House of Commons, and insulted the members for not passing what is called the Protecting Duties [11], which your nephew must explain; but the rioters were suppressed and imprisoned—*reste à voir* whether *the Volunteers* will not espouse *the Protecting Duties*, which might be very serious. I thought and said that our India Bill was still more a bill for Ireland; meaning, that if lost, and the ministry changed, I concluded the Irish would say that it was not fit to be governed by a country that could not govern itself for six months together. It looks as if I had not been totally mistaken; nor shall I be, if France, whose whole eye is on India, should contrive to find us employment in Ireland. That island is more *à leur portée* than America was. In short, the present reign may be painted in one sentence, which I found t'other day in Muratori's Annals of Italy: 'Cento si richieggono ad edificare; un solo basta per distruggere tutto.' Adieu! Return me this letter.

2474. To Earl Harcourt.

Berkeley Square, April 20, 1784.

I had a person with me on particular business, which prevented me from answering the honour of your Lordship's obliging note immediately, and thanking you for the sight of Prior's picture, which is indeed an uncommonly fine head. I was prevented from waiting on your Lordship's

[11] On the 31st of March, 1784, in the Irish House of Commons, 'Mr. Gardener brought forward a plan, for which the people had for some time been extremely clamorous, namely, that of *protecting duties*—of protecting their own manufactures, and enforcing the consumption of them at home, by laying heavy duties on similar manufactures imported from other countries.' (*Ann. Reg.* 1786, p. 11.)

ancestors, as I have been at Strawberry Hill, and returned but yesterday late; and I do not pretend to dispute Sir Joshua's skill, as he must know better than I do the pencilling of different masters. At first sight I merely supposed the Prior was painted by old Dahl[1], but I dare to say Sir Joshua is in the right.

If inclination were to govern me, I should have no occasion to give a promise of visiting Nuneham; but as in second infancy, as well as in the first, one is in the power of one's parents, Father Age and Mother Gout do not allow me to enter into positive engagements, and I dare only pledge myself to do with their good pleasure, what I shall certainly wish, while I have, &c.

HOR. WALPOLE.

2475. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, April 29, 1784.

NEVER did more traverses happen even in a lawsuit than befall poor Cavalier Mozzi! Three weeks ago Mr. Duane sent me the Cavalier's letter to Mr. Sharpe, with the handsome offer of 1,000*l.*, which I concluded my Lord would jump at; and I expected to hear that, as soon as he could dispatch an answer, I should have notice to settle the whole affair with the lawyers. No such summons arrived. Alas! the night before last I was told accidentally that Mr. Duane had had a stroke of apoplexy! I immediately wrote to Mr. Sharpe to inquire: he has this moment been with me, confirmed the melancholy story, adding that he doubts much of Mr. Duane's recovery. However, he brought me my Lord's answer—satisfactory so far, as that he will close with the Cavalier's offer; but not at all content

LETTER 2474. —[1] Michael Dahl (1656–1743). The portrait in question seems to have been painted by him. (See *D.N.B.* art. Prior, Matthew.)

with it. No matter: the affair will at least be terminated, though neither side will be pleased. A little time, I suppose, will be wasted in waiting for the event of Mr. Duane's illness; and Lucas, as Mr. Sharpe said this morning, will not hurry himself a jot more than a snail: yet, whether poor Mr. Duane recovers or not, the matter will be adjusted; it might, no doubt, in a week, but I dare to say will not be finished in two months.

As I sent you all the news I knew by your nephew, I have none to add. Most elections are over; and, if they were not, neither you nor I care about such details. I have no notion of filling one's head with circumstances of which, in six weeks, one is to discharge it for ever. Indeed, it is well that I live little in the world, or I should be obliged to provide myself with that viaticum for common conversation. Our ladies are grown such vehement politicians, that no other topic is admissible; nay, I do not know whether *you* must not learn our politics for the *conversazioni* at Florence,—at least, if Paris gives the *ton* to Italy, as it used to do. There are as warm parties for Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt at Versailles and Amsterdam as in Westminster. At the first, I suppose, they exhale in epigrams; are expressed at the second by case-knives; at the last they vent themselves in deluges of satiric prints, though with no more wit than there is in a case-knife. I was told last night that our engraved pasquinades for this winter, at twelvepence or sixpence apiece, would cost six or seven pounds.

Having written thus far, I received yours of the 9th, in which I find Cav. Mozzi is anew displeased with Mr. Sharpe, whom indeed I do not understand. He told me to-day, as justifying my Lord's dissatisfaction, that he did think his Lordship was entitled to interest on interest on part of his demand; namely, on what Lady Orford had taken away from the seats in the country. *This he had not in-*

timated before; nor indeed does he now pretend that my Lord should have more than the 1,000*l.* that he consents to take. For Sharpe's demand of the same allowance as he used to have from my Lady, it is extortion; as he certainly, by his own statement, has not been collecting rents since her death. In short, I can only recur to my old opinion, that Cav. Mozzi should have come over himself: I could have given him advice here; but being made referee for my Lord, I could not take part against him. I doubt I have gone to the utmost limits of decency and equity to protect Mozzi; and Lucas, I am persuaded, will have represented that delicacy in the worst light. I do not care; I will take no step to disculpate myself. I am only sorry that I could do no better for Mozzi: though I repeat it, he must in part blame himself for not coming to defend his own cause, which has given Sharpe and Lucas full elbow-room for plundering him;—and yet Sharpe blames, or pretends to blame, Lucas; and I must own, in justice to the former, that more than once he did provoke the latter by his opposition. I hope that Mozzi gained so much by Lady Orford's favour, from what was not within reach of our legal harpies, that he will be much at his ease; yet I shall not wonder if he has a dreadful opinion of our lawyers.

We do not know that Lady Charlotte Herbert[1] is dead, though a letter received to-day represents her case as totally desperate. Though her father was forced to be acquainted with her danger, his return will be far from a consolation. We are not surprised at any extravagance in his Lordship's morals, though at his age; but much at his profligacy counteracting his avarice. I will give you one instance of the latter. At Wilton he always recom-

LETTER 2475.—[1] Only daughter of Henry, Earl of Pembroke; her father and mother had carried her to Nice for a consumption, of which she died —but the Earl had fallen in love with an Italian female dancer or singer, and was gone with her to Florence. *Walpole.*

mends his port before his other wines, saying, 'I can warrant the port good, for I make it myself.'

I am sorry to hear you are tormented by the rheumatism. I have had it in my shoulder, though not sharply, ever since last July, and prefer the gout to it. The latter goes at its period, and does not return for some time; but the rheumatism may depart to-day and come back to-morrow, or never leave one at all. Our winter has been doleful too, though less so than in many countries. Of spring there was not a symptom a fortnight ago, though commonly many trees and most shrubs are in full leaf by the end of April. I shall visit my Strawberry to-morrow, and hope at least to find the grass verdant. We are so pestered by robbers, that a month ago I thought they had stolen all the turf of my meadows. Good night! It is near one in the morning.

2476. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Berkeley Square, Wednesday, May 5, 1784.

Your cherries, for aught I know, may, like Mr. Pitt, be half ripe before others are in blossom; but at Twickenham, I am sure, I could find dates and pomegranates on the quickset hedges, as soon as a cherry in swaddling-clothes on my walls. The very leaves on the horse-chestnuts are little snotty-nosed things, that cry and are afraid of the north wind, and cling to the bough as if *old Poker* was coming to take them away. For my part, I have seen nothing like spring but a chimney-sweeper's garland; and yet I have been three days in the country—and the consequence was, that I was glad to come back to town.

I do not wonder that you feel differently; anything is warmth and verdure when compared to poring over memorials. In truth, I think you will be much happier

for being out of Parliament. You could do no good there; you have no views of ambition to satisfy: and when neither duty nor ambition calls (I do not condescend to name avarice, which never is to be satisfied, nor deserves to be reasoned with, nor has any place in your breast) I cannot conceive what satisfaction an elderly man can have in listening to the passions or follies of others: nor is eloquence such a banquet, when one knows that, whoever the cooks are, whatever the sauces, one has eaten as good beef or mutton before, and, perhaps, as well dressed. It is surely time to live for oneself, when one has not a vast while to live; and you, I am persuaded, will live the longer for leading a country life. How much better to be planting, nay, making experiments on smoke (if not too dear), than reading applications from officers, a quarter of whom you could not serve, nor content three quarters! You had not time for necessary exercise; and, I believe, would have blinded yourself. In short, if you will live in the air all day, be totally idle, and not read or write a line by candlelight, and retrench your suppers, I shall rejoice in your having nothing to do but that dreadful punishment, pleasing yourself. Nobody has any claims on you; you have satisfied every point of honour; you have no cause for being particularly grateful to the opposition; and you want no excuse for living for yourself. Your resolutions on economy are not only prudent, but just; and, to say the truth, I believe that if you had continued at the head of the army, you would have ruined yourself. You have too much generosity to have curbed yourself, and would have had too little time to attend to doing so. I know by myself how pleasant it is to have laid up a little for those I love, for those that depend on me, and for old servants. Moderate wishes may be satisfied; and, which is still better, are less liable to disappointment.

I am not preaching, nor giving advice, but congratulating you: and it is certainly not being selfish, when I rejoice at your being thrown by circumstances into a retired life, though it will occasion my seeing less of you: but I have always preferred what was most for your own honour and happiness; and as you taste satisfaction already, it will not diminish, for they are the first moments of passing from a busy life to a quiet one that are the most irksome. You have the felicity of being able to amuse yourself with what the grave world calls trifles; but as gravity does not happen to be wisdom, trifles are full as important as what is respected as serious; and more amiable, as generally more innocent. Most men are bad or ridiculous, sometimes both: at least my experience tells me what my reading had told me before, that they are so in a great capital of a sinking country. If immortal fame is his object, a Cato may die—but he will do no good. If only the preservation of his virtue had been his point, he might have lived comfortably at Athens, like Atticus—who, by the way, happens to be as immortal; though I will give him credit for having had no such view. Indeed, I look on this country as so irrecoverably on the verge of ruin, from its enormous debt, from the loss of America, from the almost as certain prospect of losing India, that my pride would dislike to be an actor when the crash may happen.

You seem to think that I might send you more news. So I might, if I would talk of elections; but those, you know, I hate, as, in general, I do all details. How Mr. Fox has recovered such a majority I do not guess; still less do I comprehend how there could be so many that had not voted, after the poll had lasted so long. Indeed, I should be sorry to understand such mysteries.—Of new peers, or new elevations, I hear every day, but am quite ignorant which are to be true. Rumour always creates as

many as the King, when he makes several. In fact, I do know nothing. Adieu!

P.S. The summer is come to town, but I hope is gone into the country too.

2477. To Miss Hannah More[1].

May 6, 1784.

Mr. Walpole thanks Miss More a thousand times, not only for so obligingly complying with his request, but for letting him have the satisfaction of possessing and reading again and again her charming and very genteel poem, the *Bas Bleu*. He ought not, in modesty, to commend so much a piece in which he himself is flattered; but truth is more durable than blushing, and he must be just, though he may be vain. The ingenuity with which she has introduced, so easily, very difficult rhymes, is admirable; and though there is a quantity of learning, it has all the air of negligence, instead of that of pedantry. As she commands him, he will not disobey; and, so far from giving a single copy, he gives her his word that it shall not go out of his hands. He begs his particular compliments to Mrs. Garrick, and is Miss More's most devoted

And much obliged humble servant,

H. Walpole.

Letter 2477. — [1] Hannah More (1745–1833), religious writer and philanthropist, at this time well known in London literary circles, which she described in her poem *Bas Bleu*. Her acquaintance with Walpole began in 1781. He invited her to Strawberry Hill and printed her poem *Bonner's Ghost* at the Strawberry Hill Press. She was a frequent correspondent of his later years. Before his death she had in large measure withdrawn from London society, but at this period much of her time was spent with Mrs. Garrick, either in London or at her country house at Hampton.

2478. To Miss Mary Hamilton.

Mr. Walpole is exceedingly pleased with Miss Hamilton's note and obliged to her for it; and is very glad too, that his one negative produced her two affirmatives. He will never disobey Mrs. Vesey but on the same conditions[1].

2479. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, May 21, 1784.

I am perfectly satisfied with your epitaph[1], and would not have a syllable altered. It tells exactly what it means to say, and, that truth being an encomium, wants no addition or amplification. Nor do I love late language for modern facts, nor will European tongues perish since printing has been discovered. I should approve French least of all; it would be a kind of insult to the vanquished: and, besides, the example of a hero should be held out to his countrymen rather than to their enemies. You must take care to have the word *caused*, in the last line but one, spelt rightly, and not *caus'd*.

I know nothing of the Parliament but what you saw in the papers. I came hither yesterday, and am transported, like you, with the beauty of the country; ay, and with its perfumed air too. The *lilac-tide* scents even the insides of the rooms.

I desired Lady Aylesbury to carry you Lord Melcombe's *Diary*. It is curious indeed; not so much from the secrets it blabs, which are rather characteristic than novel, but

Letter 2478.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Sir W. R. Anson, Bart., Warden of All Souls College, Oxford.

[1] This note is dated in a different handwriting '10th May, 1784.'

Letter 2479.—[1] An epitaph for the monument, erected by the States of Jersey, to the memory of Major Pearson, killed in the attack of that island by the French, in January 1781. *Walpole.*

from the wonderful folly of the author, who was so fond of talking of himself, that he tells all he knew of himself, though scarce an event that does not betray his profligacy; and (which is still more surprising that he should disclose) almost every one exposes the contempt in which he was held, and his consequential disappointments and disgraces! Was ever any man the better for another's experience? What a lesson is here against versatility! I, who have lived through all the scenes unfolded, am entertained; but I should think that to younger readers half the book must be unintelligible. He explains nothing but the circumstances of his own situation; and, though he touches on many important periods, he leaves them undeveloped, and often undetermined. It is diverting to hear him rail at Lord Halifax and others, for the very kind of double-dealing which he relates coolly of himself in the next page. Had he gone backwards, he might have given half a dozen volumes of his own life, with similar anecdotes and variations. I am most surprised, that when self-love is the whole ground-work of the performance, there should be little or no attempt at shining as an author, though he was one. As he had so much wit too, I am amazed that not a feature of it appears. The discussion in the appendix, on the late Prince's question for increase of allowance, is the only part in which there is sense or honesty. There is, in the imperfect account of Rochfort[2], a strong circumstance or two that pleased me much. There are many passages that will displease several others throughout.

[2] The expedition against Rochefort of Sept. 1757. (See note 1 on letter to Conway of Oct. 8, 1757.) In his *Diary* (ed. 1785, pp. 398–401), after relating its progress and failure, Lord Melcombe adds: 'And thus ended this expedition, contrived with so much secrecy, that everything necessary to its success was a secret to the contriver himself*.' He then adds an anecdote relative to the numbers of the French force in Rochefort at the time of the proposed attack.

* The elder Pitt, then Secretary of State.

Mr. Coxe's *Travels*[3] are very different: plain, clear, sensible, instructive, and entertaining. It is a noble work, and precious to me who delight in quartos: the two volumes contain twelve hundred pages; I have already devoured a quarter, though I have had them but three days[4].

2480. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 3, 1784.

As I was told two days ago that Mr. Duane is recovered, and still, as I had heard nothing from Lucas or Sharpe, I yesterday wrote to the latter, complaining of the continuation of delay, though all points are agreed, and declaring I was ashamed of seeing Cavalier Mozzi so incessantly ill-treated. That night I found a letter on my table from Sharpe,—not an answer to mine, which he could not have received; but one to tell me that he had the day before had a letter from the Cavalier, consenting to all their demands, and promising to send the necessary order on the following Saturday. Sharpe adds these words: 'In the meantime Mr. Lucas and I have prepared a writing for the mutual discharge of all demands, which is now submitted to Mr. Duane's consideration.'

Thus I suppose, *at last*, when all has been extorted that can be, those honest gentlemen will let the Cavalier receive his remaining pittance; though, no doubt, Lucas will not be very expeditious, if he can help it, for fear of breaking his good old custom of being dilatory.

Well! but a letter was not all I found from Sharpe; it was accompanied by a very large snuff-box, and a request to inquire of *you* whether any letter of advice was sent by you to any person, or the bill of lading signed by the captain of

[3] *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark.*
[4] The rest of this letter is lost.

the Swedish ship the *Espérance* (the captain's name Lingdeen), to whom was consigned, in January 1782, the portrait of Lord Clinton, by Vandyck, which, the Cavalier says, in April last was addressed to your nephew for my Lord, and of which my Lord has yet heard nothing more. Oh, but now comes the curious part! The snuff-box, which is a black tortoise-shell one, contains an uncommonly large enamel portrait, by Zincke, of Lady Orford, painted, I suppose early, for my brother Orford. The features are extremely like; the countenance not at all so: on the neck is a flaw from the furnace. If I was surprised at its being sent to *me*, I was not less at its real destination. It was sent to me, says Sharpe, by his Lordship, either to be forwarded to the Cavalier in return (for the Lord Clinton), or to have it copied in oil to the size of life three-quarters; 'but I know no hand,' continues he, 'that I think can do that to any advantage.' He then asks my opinion, as it is supposed the Cavalier would prefer a portrait nearer to the size of life. A more absurd or indelicate thought never entered into the head of man; but, indeed, it is a madman's head! I did *not* reply that I concluded the Cavalier, had he wished for a portrait of my Lady, might have obtained one from her, and could not wish for one painted fifty years ago. I did just hint that it would be a very *odd* present from *my Lord* to the *Cavalier*, but said I did not presume to give advice: that for a copy, the picture which has no merit but in the excellence of the enamel, would make a woful appearance in oil; for it is in the plain barren manner of that time, totally void of ornament and grace. And so I sent it back to let the cabal decide, whose delicacy I do not doubt will decide for sending the original; especially as a copy, or any other present, would cost a few guineas, which they had rather get for themselves. However, it became me to object to the impropriety of giving away his mother's

picture, and to *the person* in the world to whom *he* should not send it—and there I shall leave it!

Your nephew, I depend upon it, has been with you some time, and satisfied you in all you could wish to know. The new Parliament, as the papers will have told you, and as the progress of the elections foretold, is decidedly with the court[1]. Nothing extraordinary has passed there or anywhere else. The House of Commons is occupied by the Westminster election, and sat on it till six this morning; nor yet is it finished. You know, I cannot bear election contests, nor ever inform myself of their circumstances. In truth, I am very ignorant of what is passing. I have been settled here this fortnight, though two dreary wet days drove me to town; but I returned to-day, and shall stay here if the weather is tolerable, though London is brimful—but then it is brimful of balls, shows, breakfasts, and joys, to which my age says No, and my want of inclination a treble No. It is my felicity to have remembered how ridiculous I have formerly thought old people who forgot their own age when everybody else did not; and it is lucky too that I feel no disposition that can lead me into absurdities. The present world might be my grandchildren; as they are not, I have nothing to do with them. I am glad they are amused, but neither envy nor wish to partake of their pleasures or their business. When one preserves one's senses and faculties, and suffers no pain, old age would be no grievance but for one; yet oh! that one is a heavy calamity—the surviving one's friends: nay, even the loss of one's cotemporaries is something! at least, I cannot feel interested about a generation that I do not know.

I felt this very sensibly last week. I have no taste for, and scarce ever read, the pamphlets and political letters in

LETTER 2480.—[1] The opposition moved an amendment to the Address, which was supported by only 114 votes against 282. *Walpole.*

the newspapers; but I cannot describe the avidity with which I devoured a new publication. A nephew[2] of Lord Melcombe's heir has published that Lord's *Diary*[3]. Indeed, it commences in 1749, and I grieve it was not dated twenty years earlier. However, it deals in topics that are ten times more familiar and fresh to my memory than any passage that has happened within these six months. I wish I could convey it to you. Though drawn by his own hand, and certainly meant to flatter himself, it is a truer portrait than any of his hirelings would have given. Never was such a composition of vanity, versatility, and servility! In short, there is but one feature wanting—his wit, of which in his whole book there are not three sallies. I often said of Lord Hervey and Dodington, that they were the only two I ever knew who were always aiming at wit, and yet generally found it. There is one light in which the book pleases *me* particularly; it fully justifies the unfavourable opinion I always had of the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pelham, and which was thought such heresy during their lives.

I have somehow or other made out a longer letter than I expected. My correspondence in summer has commonly been barren, and probably will not be luxuriant in this, though the Parliament will be sitting: but I shall know no more than the newspapers tell me; and they are grown so communicative, that you may draw from the fountains, without my purloining a pitcher here and there to send you. Adieu!

[2] Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, son of Thomas Wyndham, of Hammersmith.

[3] It is generally named Dodington's Memoirs. *Walpole.*

2481. To the Countess of Ailesbury.

Strawberry Hill, Tuesday night, June 8 [1784].

You frightened me for a minute, my dear Madam; but every letter since has given me pleasure, by telling how rapidly you recovered, and how perfectly well you are again. Pray, however, do not give me any more such joys. I shall be quite content with your remaining immortal, without the foil of any alarm. You gave all your friends a panic, and may trust their attachment without renewing it. I received as many inquiries the next day as if an archbishop was in danger, and all the Bench hoped he was going to heaven.

Mr. Conway wonders I do not talk of Voltaire's *Memoirs*. Lord bless me! I saw it two months ago; the Lucans brought it from Paris and lent it to me: nay, and I have seen most of it before; and I believe this an imperfect copy, for it ends nohow at all. Besides, it was quite out of my head. Lord Melcombe's *Diary* put that and everything else out of my mind. I wonder much more at Mr. Conway's not talking of this! It gossips about the living as familiarly as a modern newspaper. I long to hear what —— says about it. I wish the newspapers were as accurate! They have been circumstantial about *Lady Walsingham's* birthday clothes, which to be sure one is glad to know, only unluckily there is no such person[1]. However, I dare to say that her dress was very becoming, and that she looked charmingly.

The month of June, according to custom immemorial, is as cold as Christmas. I had a fire last night, and all my rose-buds, I believe, would have been very glad to sit by it. I have other grievances to boot; but as they are annuals

Letter 2481.—[1] This is an oversight on Walpole's part. There were at this time two Ladies Walsingham:—the widow of the first Baron, and the wife of the second—Augusta Georgiana Elizabeth Irby (d. 1818), daughter of first Baron Boston; m. (1772) Thomas de Grey, afterwards second Baron Walsingham.

too,—*videlicet*, people to see my house,—I will not torment your Ladyship with them: yet I know nothing else. None of my neighbours are come into the country yet: one would think all the dowagers were elected into the new Parliament. Adieu, my dear Madam!

2482. To Mrs. Vesey.

My dear Madam, Strawberry Hill, June 18, 1784.

As I delight in showing attention to you and Miss Hamilton, it is come into my head that very likely the two Misses Clarkes who live with Miss Hamilton would not be sorry to see my baby house in such agreeable company. If you both think so, and that it would not be impertinent in me to invite them on so little acquaintance and such short notice, will you take upon you to invite them?

Your devoted
And ever obliged,
Hor. Walpole.

2483. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1784.

You are very obliging, Madam, to embrace any opportunity of reviving our correspondence, and still more kind on that you have taken. I am, indeed, very happy in Lady Chewton's safety. I am pleased, too, that she has a boy[1], as it pleases her and Lord Chewton; nor do I wish her to encumber him with a bevy of indigent infantas; but alas! what is an heir where there is so little to inherit? Lord Chewton has every amiable virtue that man can have; but virtues are like the

Letter 2482.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Sir W. R. Anson, Bart., Warden of All Souls College, Oxford.

Letter 2483.—[1] Hon. George Waldegrave (1784–1794), succeeded his father as fifth Earl Waldegrave in 1789. He was accidentally drowned in the Thames when only ten years old.

pipkins used by chemists in search of the philosopher's stone, which are very worthy utensils when employed in humble offices, but mighty apt to crack in pursuit of gold; and, therefore, I neither believe nor desire that he would go upon the process. I went to town on Tuesday to inquire after her; and that is all I know of London. I have been constantly here, where there is nothing to know, but that it is cold when it should be hot, and that there is as great plenty as if a board of seasons could carry on the business, and let the place of first commissioner be a sinecure to their principal, the sun. My absence from London has been the reason of my not waiting on Lady Ravensworth; which I certainly will on the first opportunity. If she could do me the honour of visiting Strawberry, it should be made as easy to her Ladyship as I could contrive; nor are there more than fifteen steps in two flights up to the blue room, and three more only to the star chamber. Will you, Madam, be so good as to negotiate this for me; and to say that in any case the young lady (whose name I don't know) may command a ticket for any morning she pleases, on giving me notice two or three days before, for you must know that I have been so tormented with visitants, and demands of breach of my rules and explanations, &c., that I have been forced to print a regulation, or, in fact, a memorial, in which I have positively declared I will not depart from my method. All my mornings are disturbed, and the money I have laid out to make my house agreeable to myself has almost driven me out of it. Lady Ravensworth, on the contrary, if she comes herself, will have the contrary effect, for I will have the honour myself of showing it to her.

Captain Cook's *Voyage* I have neither read nor intend to read. I have seen the prints—a parcel of ugly faces, with blubber lips and flat noses, dressed as unbecomingly as if both sexes were ladies of the first fashion; and rows of

savages, with backgrounds of palm-trees. Indeed, I shall not give five guineas and a half—nay, they sell already for nine, for such uncouth lubbers; nor do I desire to know how unpolished the north or south poles have remained ever since Adam and Eve were just such mortals. My brother's death has made me poor, and I cannot now afford to buy everything I see. It is late, to be sure, to learn economy, but I must do it, though a little grievous, as I never was able to say the multiplication table. Well! before I come to the rule of three it will be all over; and then an obolus will serve to pay the ferryman. How he will stare if I cry, 'No, stay, I cannot give you that; it is a Queen Anne's farthing.'

I rejoice in Lady Gertrude's recovery, who I really thought looked very ill. I cannot say so of Lord Ossory, and yet I am glad he is better, if he wanted to recover—though he is so healthy that I believe he only took his anxiety for her for an ague. The young and robust are surprised at any uneasy sensation, and conclude it illness. On the contrary, we ancient invalids try to persuade ourselves that any cessation of pain promises an entire cure—and so we die, just when we imagine we have taken a new lease.

2484. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1784.

I can answer you very readily in your own tone, that is, about weather and country grievances, and without one word of news or politics; for I know neither, nor inquire of them. I am very well content to be a Strulbrug, and to *exist* after I have done *being*: and I am still better pleased that you are in the same way of thinking, or of not thinking; for I am sure both your health and your mind will find the benefits of living for yourself and family only. It were not

fit that the young should concentre themselves in so narrow a circle; nor do the young seem to have any such intention. Let them mend or mar the world as they please; the world takes its own way upon the whole: and, though there may be an uncommon swarm of animalculæ for a season, things return into their own channel from their own bias, before any effectual nostrum of fumigation is discovered. In the meantime, I am for giving all due weight to local grievances, though with no natural turn towards attending to them: but they serve for conversation. We have no newly-invented grubs to eat our fruit; indeed, I have no fruit to be eaten: but I should not lament if the worms would eat my gardener, who, you know, is so bad an one that I never have anything in my garden.

I am now waiting for dry weather to cut my hay; though nature certainly never intended hay should be cut dry, as it always rains all June. But here is a worse calamity; one is never safe by day or night: Mrs. Walsingham, who has bought your brother's late house at Ditton, was robbed a few days ago in the high road, within a mile of home, at *seven* in the evening. The *dii minorum gentium* pilfer everything. Last night they stole a couple of yards of lead off the pediment of the door of my cottage. A gentleman at Putney, who has three menservants, had his house broken open last week, and lost some fine miniatures, which he valued so much that he would not hang them up. You may imagine what a pain this gives me in my baubles! I have been making the round of my fortifications this morning, and ordering new works.

I am concerned for the account you give me of your brother. Life does not appear to be such a jewel as to preserve it carefully for its own sake. I think the same of its *good things*: if they do not procure amusement or comfort, I doubt they only produce the contrary. Yet it is silly to

repine; for, probably, whatever any man does by choice, he knows will please him best, or at least will prevent greater uneasiness. I, therefore, rather retract my concern; for, with a vast fortune, Lord Hertford might certainly do what he would: and if, at his age, he can wish for more than that fortune will obtain, I may pity his taste or temper; but I shall think that you and I are much happier who can find enjoyments in an humbler sphere, nor envy those who have no time for trifling. I who have never done anything else, am not at all weary of my occupation. Even three days of continued rain have not put me out of humour or spirits. *C'est beaucoup dire* for an *Anglais*. Adieu!

2485. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1784.

Instead of coming to you, I am thinking of packing up and going to town for winter, so desperate is the weather! I found a great fire at Mrs. Clive's this evening, and Mr. Raftor hanging over it like a smoked ham. They tell me my hay will be all spoiled for want of cutting; but I had rather it should be destroyed by standing than by being mowed, as the former will cost me nothing but the crop, and 'tis very dear to make nothing but a water-souchy of it.

You know I have lost a niece[1], and found another nephew: he makes the fifty-fourth, reckoning both sexes. We are certainly an affectionate family, for of late we do nothing but marry one another[2]. Have not you felt a little twinge in a remote corner of your heart on Lady Harrington's

Letter 2485.—[1] Walpole is probably referring to the elopement of Miss Keppel and Mr. Fitzroy, mentioned in the following letter.

[2] Horace Walpole's great-niece Lady Laura Waldegrave married her first cousin, and Mr. Fitzroy and Miss Keppel might be considered as related by descent from Charles II.

death[3]? She dreaded death so extremely that I am glad she had not a moment to be sensible of it. I have a great affection for sudden deaths; they save oneself and everybody else a deal of ceremony.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough breakfasted here on Monday, and seemed much pleased, though it rained the whole time with an Egyptian darkness. I should have thought there had been deluges enough to destroy all Egypt's other plagues: but the newspapers talk of locusts; I suppose relations of your beetles, though probably not so fond of green fruit; for the scene of their campaign is Queen Square, Westminster, where there certainly has not been an orchard since the reign of Canute.

I have, at last, seen an air-balloon; just as I once did see a tiny review, by passing one accidentally on Hounslow Heath. I was going last night to Lady Onslow at Richmond, and over Mr. Cambridge's field I saw a bundle in the air not bigger than the moon, and she herself could not have descended with more composure if she had expected to find Endymion fast asleep. It seemed to 'light on Richmond Hill; but Mrs. Hobart was going by, and her *coiffure* prevented my seeing it alight. The papers say that a balloon has been made at Paris representing the castle of Stockholm, in compliment to the King of Sweden; but that they are afraid to let it off: so, I suppose, it will be served up to him in a dessert. No great progress, surely, is made in these airy navigations, if they are still afraid of risking the necks of two or three subjects for the entertainment of a visiting sovereign. There is seldom a *feu de joie* for the birth of a Dauphin that does not cost more lives. I thought royalty and science never haggled about the value of blood when experiments are in the question.

[3] Caroline Fitzroy, Countess of Harrington, to whom General Conway had been much attached in early life.

I shall wait for summer before I make you a visit. Though I dare to say that you have converted your smoke-kilns into a manufacture of balloons, pray do not erect a Strawberry castle in the air for my reception, if it will cost a pismire a hair of its head. Good night! I have ordered my bed to be heated as hot as an oven, and Tonton and I must go into it.

2486. To Mrs. Fenn[1].

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1784.

You have doubled my confusion, Madam, instead of removing it, by the very genteel answer you have made to my apology,—however, with such evidences in my hands, I shall not again be in danger of forgetting you are an authoress, which your sentiments, sense, and style ought to confirm you in the practice of being; and the last of which I wish you may not injure by adopting phrases from any trifle of mine—yet if you do intend me that honour, I cannot affect so much modesty as not to beg to see your new work —and so I certainly should, if not personally interested in it.

Not to trouble Mr. Fenn again unnecessarily, may I beg you, Madam, to tell him that I have long begun a description of my collection, and a very imperfect list was printed several years ago, but was suppressed. I have not yet completed it, but whenever it shall be ready to appear, a copy shall certainly be at Mr. Fenn's command. I am, with the greatest regard, Madam, his and

Your much obliged
And most obedient humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2486.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. Arthur H. Frere.

[1] Afterwards Lady Fenn:—Eleanor (d. 1813), daughter of Sheppard Frere, of Roydon, Norfolk. She wrote various books for children under the names of 'Mrs. Lovechild' and 'Mrs. Teachwell.'

2487. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 8, 1784.

I have delayed and delayed writing, in hopes of being able to send you the completion of Cav. Mozzi's business; but at last I have lost my patience, as I suppose he has. Lucas is intolerable. I sent him word of it the moment I received the order on Mr. Hoare. Lucas desired to see a copy of it: I sent it. He said, Mr. Hoare must have it before he (Lucas) could withdraw the caveat: but Lucas had stayed some time before he gave me that notice. I replied, I would deliver the order, if Mr. Hoare would engage to restore it to me, provided he, Lucas, should start any new difficulties; but would not part with it out of my hands till everything was ready for conclusion: and I did express resentment at his endeavouring to represent me as the cause of the delay. I said, I had learnt circumspection from him, and gave him plainly to understand that I would not *trust him* with the order; in which I believe I was very much in the right. He begged my pardon, and pretended to have had great difficulties in waiving his own scruples—I don't know about what. Still, I hear nothing from him, though I told him, near a fortnight ago, that I would meet him and Mr. Hoare, &c., in town, whenever they would give me notice they were ready. I comprehend nothing of all this. I am surprised Lucas is not impatient to finger his booty; but his invincible slowness, in which, somehow or other, he thinks he finds his account, is perhaps the sole cause; for I do not see how he can possibly hope to extort more from Mozzi than he has done. You may depend upon hearing the moment the affair is terminated.

This letter is merely written to explain my silence to poor Mozzi. I know no news, public or private. The Parliament sits, but only on necessary business. There is

much noise about a variety of new taxes, yet only few have a right to complain of them[1]. The majority of the nation persisted in approving and calling for the American war, and ought to swallow the heavy consequences in silence. Instead of our colonies and trade, we have a debt of two hundred and fourscore millions! Half of that enormous burthen our *wise* country-gentlemen have acquired, instead of an alleviation of the land-tax, which they were such boobies as to expect from the prosecution of the war! Posterity will perhaps discover what his own age would not see, that my father's motto, *Quieta non movere*, was a golden sentence; but what avail retrospects?

Pray tell me if you know anything of a very thin book lately printed at Florence, called *The Arno Miscellany*, said to be printed at the Stamperia Bonducciana; and what does that mean? The Abbé Bonducci I thought dead many years ago; yet that term, and the style of the work, seems to allude to his buffoonery[2]. The paper, impression, and binding, I will swear, are Florentine. This dab was left at my house in town without a name. It consists of some pretended translations and odes by (pretended) initials, though I suppose all by the same hand. The two last are a pastoral and an ode that are perfect nonsense; designedly nonsensical, no doubt; yet undesignedly too, for they have no humour, or at least no originality, being copies of Swift's ballad, 'Mild Arcadians, ever blooming': and certainly nothing is so easy as to mismatch substantives and adjectives, when the idea has once been started. The last ode seems to be meant to ridicule Gray's magnificent odes, and in truth

LETTER 2487.—[1] The budget comprised a loan of six millions, which was obtained on very favourable terms, and an increase of the window-tax, to make up for a reduction of the duties on tea. *Walpole.*

[2] This was a slip of memory. Mr. Walpole, in 1740, had been acquainted at Florence with the Abbés Bonducci and Buondelmonte: the latter was the wit and mimic; the other had taught Mr. Gray Italian. In this letter Mr. Walpole had confounded them. *Walpole.*

is better than the serious pieces; for a thousand persons can mimic an actor, who cannot act themselves. I imagine the whole to be the work of young Beckford[3], the Alderman's son, who has just parts enough to lead him astray from common sense. He is just returned from Italy.

One of my hundred nieces has just married herself by an expedition to Scotland. It is Mrs. Keppel's second daughter[4]; a beautiful girl, and more universally admired than her sister or cousins the Waldegraves. For such an exploit her choice is not a very bad one; the swain is eldest son[5] of Lord Southampton[6]. Mrs. Keppel has been persuaded to pardon her, but Lady Southampton is inexorable; nor can I quite blame her, for she has thirteen other children, and a fortune was very requisite; but both the bride and bridegroom are descendants of Charles II, from whom they probably inherit stronger impulses than a spirit of collateral calculation.

Another of the Fitzroys is dead, the Dowager Lady Harrington[7], who in the predominant characteristic of the founders of her line certainly did not degenerate in her day from the King her grandfather, or her grandam the Duchess of Cleveland.

Adieu! I hope you will hear from me again very soon; but I answer for nothing that depends on Lucas. One would think he had been the inventor of the game of chess.

[3] William Beckford the younger (1759–1844), of Fonthill; author of *Vathek*.

[4] Laura, second daughter of Dr. Frederic Keppel, Bishop of Exeter, by Laura, eldest daughter of Sir Edward Walpole. *Walpole.*

[5] Hon. George Ferdinand Fitzroy (1761–1810), eldest son of first Baron Southampton, whom he succeeded in 1797.

[6] Lord Southampton was grandson of the Duke of Grafton; the Bishop of Exeter's mother was Lady Anne Lenox, daughter of the first Duke of Richmond. *Walpole.*

[7] Lady Caroline Fitzroy, eldest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Grafton, and widow of Henry Stanhope, second Earl of Harrington. *Walpole.*—Lord Harrington's name was William, not Henry.

2488. To Sir Horace Mann.

July 10, 1784.

The very night on which I sent my letter for you to town, complaining of Lucas's tediousness, I received one,—not from him, but from Mr. Sharpe,—telling me that Mr. [Hoare] *had* paid the money to my Lord, who had executed a full discharge to Cavalier Mozzi, one part of which was lodged with Mr. Hoare, and the other part, or duplicate, he, Sharpe, had sent to me, *as he apprehended the Chevalier had desired him to do*, in hopes that I might find some favourable opportunity of conveying it to you; and, as the Chevalier must execute a counterpart, he had sent that to me too, and had himself written to Mozzi to acquaint him with the termination, and in what manner he must execute the deed. Thus the same post will convey my complaint of the delay, and Sharpe's account of the conclusion: however, this will explain the contradiction. But what will explain Lucas's conduct? He would not withdraw the caveat till Mr. Hoare had the order; and yet Mr. Hoare pays the money without that order, of which he has seen nothing but a copy! This may be law—it is not common sense.

What do you think, too, of Lucas's impertinence to me? I was referee; I have made no decision in form; I offered to meet all the parties, to settle and conclude the whole business: and then Lucas, without taking notice of me, concludes the whole without me! A footman would have been treated with less disrespect; they would at least have told him they did not want him. I have written a word of resentment to Sharpe; but do not mention it to Mozzi, lest he should suspect any informality, and not yet be easy.

I do not doubt but they have acted legally, and only chose to affront *me* after all the trouble I have had. They never

omit any opportunity of egging the poor madman[1] to insult me. I wish that was all: I despise such wretches; but I am not indifferent to being kept out of even the interest of my fortune. But I shall not trouble you with my own grievances; indeed, they do not sit heavy. I am arrived too near the term when grievances or joys will be equally shadows passed away, not to consider either but as the colours of a moment. A prospect of suffering long may poison even the present hour; but it were weak indeed to be much affected by injuries that arrive at the end of one's course: one is within reach of the great panacea which delivers one from the power of the most malevolent. Old age is like dipping one in Styx; not above the breadth of one's heel is left vulnerable. I perceive this numbness even to bodily pain. Some years ago the dread of a fit of the gout soured even the intervals; now, if the apprehension occurs, I say to myself, 'Is not it full as probable that I shall be laid out as be laid up? then why anticipate what may never happen?' My dear Sir, life is like a chess-board,—the white spaces and the black are close together: it does not signify of which hue the last square is; the border closes all!

12th.

Well! I have received a note from Lucas, to tell me he had desired Mr. Sharpe to give me intelligence of the conclusion, and that Mr. Hoare *now* ought to have the order—if I please to deliver it. This, you see, is again to imply blame on me, as if I could have had any reason for detaining the order, but from a caution which in justice I owed to Cav. Mozzi. Does any one give up an order on a banker, unless he is ready to pay the money? Nor indeed did I know till now that a banker would pay money on the *copy* of an order. It is all a juggle that I do not compre-

LETTER 2488.—[1] The Earl of Orford.

hend: perhaps it is not irreputable not to understand all the tricks of such an attorney as Lucas.

I can plainly see that he and his associates are willing to censure me for ends for which they would always have pretended some reasons or other; and it is not improbable but that was an inducement to employing me as referee. Lucas knew I disapproved of his instigating my Lord to contest his mother's will; and, because I have said what I owed in justice to Mozzi, he will have represented me as partial to one for whom in reality I could have no partiality, though I certainly would not be influenced by any prejudice against him. I smile at all their plots, and am not fool enough to entertain myself with such improbable visions as they may think I indulge; though my whole conduct, and the little management I have had for the crew, prove how far I am from having a grain of such weakness.

I trust, my dear Sir, that this is the last letter I shall write to you on the subject of Mozzi. Sharpe's expression, of apprehending the Chevalier meant the deed should be deposited with *me*, looks as if he had expected it himself; or that he is in the plot of representing me as acting in concert with Mozzi. On the other hand, I should not be surprised if Mozzi, from the unfavourableness of the decision, should suspect me of having acted too partially towards my Lord. I cannot help it if he does.

It will be some comfort to reflect that, if I have dissatisfied both sides, it is a presumption that I have not been very partial to either. At Mozzi I shall not wonder. From the other side I have never met but ingratitude, distrust, and ill-usage, in return for behaviour, I will dare to say, unparalleled in tenderness, care, attention to his interest, and most scrupulous integrity. Should it ever come to the test, I know what my reward would be. Adieu!

2489. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 6, 1784.

I am very sorry, my dear Lord, that I must answer your Lordship's letter by a condolence. I had not the honour of being acquainted with Mrs. Vyse[1], but have heard so much good of her, that it is impossible not to lament her.

Since this month began we have had fine weather; and 'twere great pity if we had not, when the earth is covered with such abundant harvests! They talk of an earthquake having been felt in London. Had Sir William Hamilton been there, he would think the town gave itself great airs. He, I believe, is *putting up* volcanos in his own country. In my youth, philosophers were eager to ascribe every uncommon discovery to the deluge; now it is the fashion to solve every appearance by conflagrations. If there was such an inundation upon the earth, and such a furnace under it, I am amazed that Noah and company were not boiled to death. Indeed, I am a great sceptic about human reasonings; they predominate only for a time, like other mortal fashions, and are so often exploded after the mode is passed, that I hold them little more serious, though they call themselves wisdom. How many have I lived to see established and confuted! For instance, the necessity of a southern continent, as a balance, was supposed to be unanswerable; and so it was, till Captain Cook found there was no such thing. We are poor silly animals: we live for an instant upon a particle of a boundless universe, and are much like a butterfly that should argue about the nature of the seasons and what creates their vicissitudes, and does not exist itself to see one annual revolution of them!

Letter 2489.—[1] Anne, daughter of Sir George Howard, K.B., by Lady Lucy Wentworth (sister of the Earl of Strafford, Walpole's correspondent), and wife of General Richard Vyse, of Stoke Place, Bucks.

Adieu, my dear Lord! If my reveries are foolish, remember, I give them for no better. If I depreciate human wisdom, I am sure I do not assume a grain to myself; nor have anything to value myself upon more than being your Lordship's most obliged humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2490. To JAMES DODSLEY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1784.

I MUST beg, Sir, that you will tell Mr. Pinkerton[1] that I am much obliged to him for the honour he is willing to do me, though I must desire his leave to decline it. His book deserves an eminent patron: I am too inconsiderable to give any relief to it, and even in its own line am unworthy to be distinguished. One of my first pursuits was a collection of medals; but I early gave it over, as I could not afford many branches of *virtù*, and have since changed or given away several of my best Greek and Roman medals. What remain, I shall be glad to show Mr. Pinkerton; and, if it would not be inconvenient to him to come hither any morning by eleven o'clock, after next Thursday, that he will appoint, he shall not only see my medals, but any other baubles here that can amuse him. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

LETTER 2490.—[1] John Pinkerton (1758–1826), antiquary and historian. The book in question was an *Essay on Medals*, published anonymously in 1784. It appears from the above letter that Pinkerton became acquainted with Horace Walpole about this time. They corresponded, and Pinkerton frequently visited Strawberry Hill. After Walpole's death Pinkerton published *Walpoliana* (2 vols. 12mo), containing notes of Walpole's conversation, letters addressed by him to Pinkerton, and remarks on Walpole's habits and character.

2491. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 9, 1784.

Yours of the 24th of July, which I have just received, tells me that Cav. Mozzi is much disappointed at the small sum he is to receive on the winding-up of his affair. I am not surprised, and can only tell him what I have said to my nephew; from whom I have, to *my* great surprise, received a letter of thanks, but saying that Cav. Mozzi must be satisfied, as many points had been given up. I replied, 'That I had done but my duty in undertaking the arbitration, to prevent a very disagreeable discussion in a public court—(on *that* head you will not lay much stress to Mozzi)—that I confessed I had favoured Mozzi to the utmost of my power, as far as I thought I might; that *he*, a stranger, and not acquainted with even his own lawyer or referee, might not think himself betrayed; and that I had done it the rather, lest he should suspect me of partiality too; that, for thanks, his Lordship owed me none; as I owned, that, if Mr. Duane had not given his opinion so much in favour of his Lordship, I should have been inclined to have allowed him less; and, consequently, I could not agree that any rights had been ceded on that side.'

I do not doubt but Lucas had already acquainted him with what I have said, though, perhaps, neither the one nor the other expected I should be so frank. I did not expect to content either party, nor have even contented myself; but I could not act otherwise than I have done. And, as Cav. Mozzi would not be persuaded by anything I could urge to come over, he must blame himself, if his cause has not been better defended.

The history of Count Albany's daughter is no news to

me[1]; I knew it from a physician[2] who attended her at Paris: but you mistake the name of the mother, which was Walkinshaw[3], not Walsingham, and who has a sister now living, that was Woman of the Bedchamber to the late Princess of Wales. The family of Fitzjames have always opposed the acknowledgement of the daughter, lest on her father's death they should be obliged to maintain her in a greater style than they wished.

I asked you a question in my last, about some poems lately printed at Florence: I know now that I did guess the right author[4].

I know no news, public or private. We have had, and it still continues, a most dismal summer; not only wet, but so cold, that for these two evenings I have had a fire. The rage of air-balloons still continues, both here and in France. The Duc de Chartres made a campaign in one, that did not redound to his glory more than his former one by sea. As he has miscarried on three elements, he should try if he could purify himself by the fourth. He is now in England for the third time.

I have been writing to you this morning, but you will not receive my letter immediately. It is to recommend

LETTER 2491.—[1] The Pretender had just acknowledged his natural daughter, declared her his heiress, and pretended to create her Duchess of Albany. He sent this declaration to be registered at Paris, where it was registered. *Walpole.*

[2] Dr. Gem, an English physician settled at Paris. *Walpole.*

[3] Clementina, daughter of John Walkinshaw, of Barrowfield and Camlachie near Glasgow. She separated from the Prince in 1760, and died at Freiburg in Switzerland in 1802. She was latterly known as the Comtesse d'Albertroff.

[4] Mr. Walpole was misinformed; at least, it is not certain that Mr. Beckford had any hand in those poems, which were written in concert by the persons whose initials are prefixed. 'M.' was Captain Merry, who had been in the Horse Guards, sold out, and retired to Florence. The second was old Alan Ramsay, the painter and author, son of Alan Ramsay, the Scotch poet. The son, who died at Dover about this time, on his return from Italy, whither he had been for his health, brought over some copies of these poems, and had ordered, or intended, a copy to be sent to Mr. Walpole, who from his family probably received it. The third was one Buignon, a Swiss governor to Mr. Dawkins. *Walpole.*

Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's[5] only son, who is on his travels. The grandfather[6] was my father's most intimate friend, and the late Lord[7] a friend of mine; and with the present I have been much acquainted from a boy; consequently, I should wish you to be kind to the son, even if you were not always disposed to be so. But I have been so unlucky in my *protégés*, and your goodness has been so thrown away upon them, that I desire no work of supererogation on my account. The son of an English peer, whose father has a considerable office, is entitled to attentions enough; but, after Mr. Windham, I will never trust any man with particular credentials, nor will expose you to rudenesses by beseeching you to fling your pearls before swine. I even restrain myself from recommending the gentleman who travels with Mr. Edgcumbe, though I think him a sensible, prudent young man. I did recommend him to Lord Mount-Edgcumbe. He is a youngish French Protestant, of a very good gentleman's family, and left the service on, I believe, an affair of honour. He was addressed to the Duke of Richmond and to me, by the Prince de Bauffremont, in the strongest terms imaginable. He passed three years in this country in a manner that fully justified his character. He speaks and writes English well; his name is De Soyres. It was not in my power to serve him but in the manner I did; and he gives great satisfaction in his present situation. As the Mentor is so much a gentleman, I hope the Telemachus will give you no trouble. But, were it Minerva herself, I prefer your peace; and therefore pray lay yourself out in no attentions beyond what you find received

[5] George, third Lord Edgcumbe, created Viscount Mount-Edgcumbe by George III. He was an Admiral, and Captain of the Band of Pensioners. *Walpole.*

[6] Richard, the first Baron created by George II, had been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. *Walpole.*

[7] Richard, second Baron, was Comptroller of the Household to George II. *Walpole.*

with 'reciprocity[8].' Your nephew, I hope, is not leaving you yet; in him, I am sure, neither you nor I shall be disappointed. Adieu!

2492. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 14, 1784.

As Lady Cecilia Johnston offers to be postman, I cannot resist writing a line, though I have not a word to say. In good sooth, I know nothing, hear of nothing but robberies and housebreaking; consequently never think of ministers, India directors, and such honest men. Mrs. Clive has been broken open, and Mr. Raftor miscarried and died of the fright. Lady ——[1] has lost all her liveries and her temper, and Lady ——[1] has cried her eyes out on losing a lurch and almost her wig. In short, as I do not love exaggeration, I do not believe there have been above threescore highway robberies within this week, fifty-seven houses that have been broken open, and two hundred and thirty that are to be stripped on the first opportunity. We are in great hopes, however, that the King of Spain, now he has demolished Algiers[2], the metropolitan see of thieves, will come and bombard Richmond, Twickenham, Hampton Court, and all the suffragan cities that swarm with pirates and banditti, as he has a better knack at destroying vagabonds than at recovering his own[3].

[8] A term used by Lord Shelburne on the peace with America, and much ridiculed at that time. *Walpole.*

Letter 2492.—[1] These names are filled in by Wright as respectively 'Browne' and 'Blandford.' The latter is evidently impossible, as Lady Blandford died in 1779. The reference is probably to Lady Margaret Compton. (See *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 22, 1900.)

[2] The Spanish fleet sailed from Carthagena on June 28, 1784, and anchored in the bay of Algiers. The town was bombarded on July 12 without any decisive result. A fortnight later bad weather and disagreement between the commanders caused the withdrawal of the fleet without its having accomplished anything.

[3] Alluding to the failure to take Gibraltar.

Ireland is in a blessed way; and, as if the climate infected everybody that sets foot there, the Viceroy's aides-de-camp have blundered into a riot[4], that will set all the humours afloat. I wish you joy of the summer being come now it is gone, which is better than not coming at all. I hope Lady Cecilia will return with an account of your all being perfectly well. Adieu!

2493. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 19, 1784.

I was not alert, I own, Madam, in answering your Ladyship's last note, and I thought, for tolerable reasons. I am so superannuated, so antiquated, that it is impossible my letters should entertain you; and I did suspect that, with all your civility, *you* felt what *I* know. You might have other reasons, too, for letting a correspondence languish which my unreasonable length of life has protracted longer than you could expect. I am always ready to do justice on myself; and should always remember your past goodness, and approve your abridging it when it grows a tax rather than an amusement.

You did mention your intention of going to Kingsgate[1], but I had not heard of that journey taking place. I am not surprised at your liking it, for it is certainly singular, and in no light disagreeable. The situation is uncommon and cheerful, and the buildings and erections so odd, and so

[4] 'Dublin, August 4. Last Monday night, between the hours of eleven and twelve, a number of officers in the army entered the shop of Mr. Flattery, a publican on Ormond Quay, near Essex Bridge, and by their intemperate behaviour (arising, it is supposed, from their being somewhat in liquor) occasioned a considerable riot, which took place betwixt them and some of the Volunteers.—We are happy to add, that although several persons were wounded on both sides, no lives were lost in the affray.' (*Ann. Reg.* 1784–5, p. 198.)

Letter 2493.—[1] A seat of the first Lord Holland near Margate; sold by his second son Charles Fox, to whom he left it.

little resembling any one ever saw, that a view might, to those who were never there, be passed for a prospect in some half-civilized island discovered by Captain Cook, and, with leave of the editors, more novel than any in the new pompous publication. I am as little surprised that the place, after the first impression, should have excited a thousand less pleasing reflections—*there's room for meditation.*

The verses[2] that Lady Ravensworth has in MS. have been frequently printed in magazines since, nay, and before Mr. Gray's death. I was very sorry that he wrote them, and ever gave a copy of them. You may be sure I did not recommend their being printed in his Works; nor were they.

I am glad your society is improved by Lady Ravensworth's company, and I hope all the three generations will return much amended in health. Though I am too indolent ever to try it, I have the highest opinion of sea air, and always in every illness determine to go to the coast; and as constantly neglect it when I am better, as if it was a qualm of conscience, that was dissipated by health. At present I am scandalously well, considering what a winter and what a summer there have been. Except three days at Park Place, I have not stirred hence. If I did, I should not sojourn in an inn at Margate! I have a notion my friend Mrs. Vesey is there, but I have no more intelligence from London than from Hindostan. Florence is the nearest spot whence I hear any news. The dying Pretender has acknowledged his natural daughter Lady Charlotte Stuart, and created her Duchess of Albany, and declared her his heiress. I heard a report some time ago in town, that his queen, as soon as she is dowager, intends to come to England and marry Alfieri, who is or was here, being sent out of Rome

[2] Gray's *Impromptu* beginning 'Old, and abandon'd by each venial friend,' written after seeing Kingsgate.

at the instance of the Cardinal of York. I don't know whether her royal highness, Lady Mary Coke, will visit her after such a *mésalliance*, though, having quarrelled with most of the sovereigns of Europe, it would be refreshing to have an intimacy with a royal relict.

Have you seen the Memoirs of Marshal Villars[3], Madam? The two first volumes have many entertaining passages. The two latter are a little tedious, but to *me* very interesting, for they abuse my father—stay, let me account for this satisfaction. The opposition wrote volumes to accuse him of being a tool to France, and governed by Cardinal Fleury; Marshal Villars is so good as to rail at the Cardinal for being governed and duped by my father. It is not living to no purpose, when I have reached to this vindication.

This summer has afforded me *two* such *amendes honorables*. In my earlier time I was almost proscribed for my contempt of the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pelham. Lord Melcombe's *Diary* does not prove that I was so much in the wrong. It is comfortable to find that one does not *always* form judgements ill founded! and that one's opinions may grow fashionable when one is dead.

2494. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1784.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for the pieces you have sent me of your own composition. There is great poetic beauty and merit in them, with great knowledge of the ancient masters and of the best of the modern. You have talents that will succeed in whatever path you pursue, and industry to neglect nothing that will improve them. Despise

[3] Claude Louis Hector (1653–1734), Duc de Villars, Maréchal de France, one of the most celebrated generals of Louis XIV.

Letter 2494.—Collated with original in possession of Messrs. Pearson & Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, S.W.

petty critics, and confute them by making your works as perfect as you can.

I am sorry you sent me the old manuscript; because, as I told you, I have so little time left to enjoy anything, that I should think myself a miser if I coveted for a moment what I must leave so soon.

I shall be very glad, Sir, to see you here again, whenever it is convenient to you. Lest I should forget the time, be so good as to acquaint me three or four days beforehand when you wish to come, that I may not be out of the way, and I will fix a day for expecting you.

I am, Sir,

Your obliged, humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2495. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 25, 1784.

I THOUGHT I had done corresponding with you about Cavalier Mozzi; but here is a letter which you must deliver to him. Good Mr. Duane came to me two days ago, and insisted on my sending it. He protests that he declared at first to Mr. Sharpe that he would accept no reward for his trouble; that he undertook it to oblige Mr. Morice, and says he has had little trouble: and, though I thought it decent to press him to accept the draft, he would not hear of it; and it is here enclosed. I own I am charmed with his handsome behaviour; it confirms the character I gave of him when I recommended him to Cav. Mozzi, and, I think, ought to convince the latter that Mr. Duane was clear in the judgement he pronounced. Still, I must regret that my Lord was advised to make the claim, and shall never be persuaded but that Lucas had multiplied documents that it was impossible to fathom without a waste of years; but

which, if they could have been probed to the bottom, would not have stood the test. All the comfort that remains is, that the duration of a law-suit would probably have cost as much to Mozzi as he has now lost.

The Parliament is risen; and, having lasted so late in the year, is not likely to meet again till after Christmas. Consequently, no events are to be expected, unless the scene should grow very serious in Ireland, as it threatens; but it is to be hoped that our American experience has taught us discretion.

I interest myself little in novelties, but I own I have some remains of curiosity from ancient impressions. Pray send me the sequel of the Count Albany and Lady Charlotte Fitzcharles[1], his daughter, the new Duchess. I shall like to know, too, whether the Cardinal assumes the royal title when his brother dies. I recollect but two King-Cardinals, Henry of Portugal and the Cardinal of Bourbon, whom the League called Charles the Tenth, but who attained the crown no more than the Cardinal of York will do. If the Count himself has any feeling left, he must rejoice to hear that the descendants of many of his martyrs are to be restored to their forfeited estates in Scotland, by an Act just passed.

As this was meant but for a cover to the enclosed, I will not pique myself on making it longer, when I have no more materials. In good truth, I may allow myself a brief epistle now and then. I have been counting how many letters I have written to you since I landed in England in 1741: they amount—astonishing!—to above eight hundred; and we have not met in three-and-forty years! A correspondence of near half a century is, I suppose, not to be paralleled in the annals of the post office!

LETTER 2495.—[1] She was styled Lady Charlotte Stuart.

2496. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 26, 1784.

I must reply a few words, Madam. I was so far from thinking that you had any *double* meaning in your congratulation on the *Fitzroyal* match, that I had not, when I received your Ladyship's letter on that subject, ever heard that there could be a *double* meaning in that expression. It is a delicate subject no doubt, as, indeed, the subject always is, where the fate of a young woman is at stake. However, on my own part I can speak with the utmost truth and simplicity, for I have nothing to disguise or conceal. I remember you thought me mysterious on a *royaller* match[1]; and yet it proved that I had been totally out of the secret till it was publicly divulged.

It is most strictly fact, that I live so totally out of the world, and know so little of what is passing in it, that going to town to see Lady Chewton on her lying-in, as I was leaving her I said, 'Is it true that Mr. Fitzroy likes Laura?' 'Likes her!' replied she, 'why, have you heard nothing?' 'Yes,' said I, 'I was told at Twickenham that they were much together.' 'Bless me,' said she, 'don't you know that they ran away yesterday?'

I was still more in the dark about volume the second[2]: I had not even so much as heard that the parties had ever been supposed to like—nay, the proposal had been made to the Duke[3] before even common fame, that knows everything, had told me what she had told to everybody else; and when everybody else told it, till it reached even me, I did not ask

Letter 2496. — [1] That of the Duchess of Gloucester.

[2] Apparently the engagement of Horace Walpole's great-niece, Lady Maria Waldegrave, to the Earl of Euston (son of Lady Ossory by her first marriage). They were married on Nov. 16, 1784.

[3] Perhaps the Duke of Gloucester, step-father of Lady Maria.

a question about it of those who must know something of the matter, and it was quite accidentally that it has been mentioned to me at all: nor can I at all judge whether there is any likelihood of its taking place. I have not varied in a tittle from the most minute veracity; though as your Ladyship cannot conceive the extreme ignorance in which I live, you may perhaps think my account inexplicable, or imagine that there is some coldness between me and my family; though there is not the smallest. I believe my nieces love me as much as they can love an old obsolete uncle, for I am always in good humour with them and never preach; but I do not wonder that they do not run to me with their histories, who never interfere in them, nor give my advice unless they ask it.

The new Duchess of Albany, the only child the dying Pretender ever had, was by a Mrs. Walkinshaw, sister of the Woman of the Bedchamber to the late Princess of Wales. The mother and daughter lived in a convent, at Paris, on a moderate pension from the Cardinal of York. They formerly went to Rome, but were sent back. The mother died a year or two ago[4]; the daughter is about nine-and-twenty. The house of Fitzjames, fearing their becoming a burden to themselves, prevented the acknowledgement of the daughter.

I have sent for the Memoirs of Cromwell's family[5]; but as yet have only seen extracts from it in a magazine. It can contain nothing a thousandth part so curious as what we know already; the intermarriage in the fourth descent of Oliver's posterity and King Charles's[6]; the speech of

[4] This was not the case; see note 3 on letter to Mann of July 10, 1784.

[5] *Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell*, by the Rev. Mark Noble (1754–1827), at this time incumbent of Clinton and Packwood in Warwickshire. His book procured for him the patronage of Lords Leicester and Sandwich, by whose influence he was appointed by Lord Thurlow to the rectory of Barming in Kent.

[6] This fact is recorded by Horace Walpole in his notes on Strange Occurrences (see *Works*, vol. iv. p. 364).

Richard Cromwell to Lord Bathurst[7] in the House of Lords; and Fanny Russell's[8] reply to the late Prince of Wales on the 30th of January. They are anecdotes, especially the two first, worthy of being inserted in the history of mankind, which, if well chosen and well written, would precede common histories, which are but repetitions of no uncommon events.

The table he gives in proof of his assertion is, however, incorrect in two particulars. He traces the descent through Cromwell's daughter Lady Fauconberg, but she died without issue. The descent was through another daughter of Cromwell's (who was therefore the sister of Lady Fauconberg, not her daughter, as Horace Walpole represents), i.e. Lady Russell. This error is corrected by the Hon. J. A. Home in a note on Lady Mary Coke's *Journal* (vol. iii. p. 110, n. 5).

The descents are shown by the following table:—

Charles I	Oliver Cromwell
Charles II	Lady Russell
Countess of Lichfield	Lady Frankland
Earl of Lichfield	Sir Thomas Frankland
Earl of Lichfield =	Diana Frankland

[7] 'Richard Cromwell, second Protector, it is well known, was produced as a witness at the age of near ninety, in Westminster Hall, in a civil suit. It is said that the council of the opposite party reviled the good old man with his father's crimes, but was reproved by the judge, who ordered a chair to be brought for the venerable ancient; and that Queen Anne, to her honour, commended the judge for his conduct. From Westminster Hall, Richard had the curiosity to go into the House of Lords; and standing at the bar, and it being buzzed that so singular a personage was there, Lord Bathurst, then one of the twelve new created peers, went to the bar and conversed with Mr. Cromwell. Happening to ask how long it was since Mr. Cromwell had been in that House—"Never, my Lord," answered Richard, "since I sat in that chair"—pointing to the throne.' (Note by Walpole on Strange Occurrences; see *Works*, vol. iv. p. 364.)

[8] Frances, eldest daughter of John Russell (third son of Sir John Russell, third Baronet, of Chippenham, by Elizabeth, daughter of Oliver Cromwell); m. John Revett, of Chequers Court, Buckinghamshire. She was Bedchamber Woman to the Princess Amelia, and died in 1775. The following account of her 'reply' (related to Gray by Horace Walpole, and transcribed from among the former's *Collectanea* by Mitford) is printed in the Rev. D. C. Tovey's *Gray and his Friends* (p. 286):—'Mrs. Russell (by no means famed for her wit) a Granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell was dressing the Princess Amelia one 30th of January when late Pr. of W. came in to her apartment and said, this is a day that every body ought to be at Church, and especially you, Mrs. Russell, sh^d be mortifying and doing penance. S^r (says she) do you think it is not mortification enough for a descendant of Ol. Cromwell's to be here pinning up your sister's tail.'

I did read the *Lettres de Cachet*; but, like the *Tableau de Paris*, they shocked me far more than they amused me. I hate to read or hear of miseries that one knows it is out of one's power to remedy. The earthquakes in Naples and Sicily last year were of that kind. When I glance in a newspaper on an article of a report on convicts, I hide the paragraph with my finger, that I may not know the day of execution, and feel for what wretches, whom I cannot help, are feeling. The knowledge of woes that one can alleviate, ought never to be avoided—when they are too big for my weak grasp, I fly to the gayer side of the picture—and there one can always find food for smiles. I have often said that this world is a comedy to those who think, and a tragedy to those who feel!—but I have wandered beyond the bounds of a reply, and will wish a calm to Kingsgate, and fair weather everywhere. Were Homer alive, who made gods and goddesses commissaries and contractors to kings, I suppose he would tell us that Ceres having favoured the English with exuberant plenty, Juno, who was on the French side, sent deluges to drown all harvest. Good night, Madam.

2497. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 7, 1784.

The summer is come at last, my Lord, dressed as fine as a Birthday, though not with so many flowers on its head. In truth, the sun is an old fool, who apes the modern people of fashion by arriving too late: the day is going to bed before he makes his appearance; and one has scarce time to admire his embroidery of green and gold. It was cruel to behold such expanse of corn everywhere, and yet see it all turned to a water-souchy. If I could admire Dante,—which, asking Mr. Hayley's pardon, I do not,—

I would have written an olio of Jews and pagans, and sent Ceres to reproach Master Noah with breaking his promise of the world never being drowned again. But this last week has restored matters to their old channel; and I trust we shall have bread to eat next winter, or I think we must have lived on apples, of which to be sure there is enough to prevent a famine. This is all I know, my Lord; and I hope no news to your Lordship. I have exhausted the themes of air-balloons and highwaymen; and if you *will* have my letters, you must be content with my commonplace chat on the seasons. I do nothing worth repeating, nor hear that others do: and though I am content to rust myself, I should be glad to tell your Lordship anything that would amuse you. I dined two days ago at Mrs. Garrick's with Sir William Hamilton, who is returning to the kingdom of cinders. Mrs. Walsingham was there with her son[1] and daughter[2]. He is a very pleasing young man; a fine figure; his face like hers, with something of his grandfather Sir Charles Williams, without his vanity: very sensible, and uncommonly well bred. The daughter is an imitatress of Mrs. Damer, and has modelled a bust of her brother. Mrs. Damer herself is modelling two masks for the key-stones of the new bridge at Henley. Sir William, who has seen them, says they are in her true antique style. I am in possession of her sleeping dogs in terra-cotta. She asked me if I would consent to her executing them in marble for the Duke of Richmond? I said, gladly; I should like they should exist in a more durable material; but I would not part with the original, which is sharper and more alive. Mr. Wyat the architect saw them here lately;

LETTER 2497.—[1] Richard Boyle-Walsingham, d. unmarried in 1788.

[2] Charlotte, only daughter of Hon. Robert Boyle-Walsingham, by Charlotte, second daughter of Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams; m. (1791) Lord Henry Fitzgerald, third son of first Duke of Leinster. In 1806 the abeyance of the barony of De Ros was terminated in her favour.

and said he was sure that if the idea was given to the best statuary in Europe, he would not produce so perfect a group. Indeed, with these dogs and the riches I possess by Lady Di[3], poor Strawberry may vie with much prouder collections.

Adieu, my good Lord! when I fold up a letter I am ashamed of it; but it is your own fault. The last thing I should think of would be troubling your Lordship with such insipid stuff, if you did not command it. Lady Strafford will bear me testimony how often I have protested against it.

I am her Ladyship's and your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2498. To JOHN PINKERTON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1784.

I HAVE read your piece, Sir, very attentively; and, as I promised, will give you my opinion of it fairly. There is much wit in it, especially in the part of Nebuchadnezer; and the dialogue is very easy, and the *dénouement* in favour of Barbara interesting. There are, however, I think, some objections to be made, which, having written so well, you may easily remove, as they are rather faults in the mechanism than in the writing.

Several scenes seem to me to finish too abruptly, and not to be enough connected. Juliana is not enough distinguished, as of an age capable of more elevated sentiments: her desire of playing at hot-cockles and blindman's buff sounds more childish than vulgar.

There is another defect, which is in the conduct of the plot: surely there is much too long an interval between the

[3] The number of original drawings by Lady Diana Beauclerc, at Strawberry Hill. *Walpole.*

discovery of the marriage of Juliana and Philip, and the anger of her parents. The audience must expect immediate effect from it; and yet the noise it is to make arrives so late, that it would have been forgotten in the course of the intermediate scenes.

I doubt a little whether it would not be dangerous to open the piece with a song that must be totally incomprehensible to at least almost all the audience. It is safer to engage their prejudices by something captivating. I have the same objection to Juliana's mistaking *deposit* for *posset*, which may give an ill turn: besides, those mistakes have been too often produced on the stage: so has the character of Mrs. Winter, a romantic old maid; nor does she contribute to the plot or catastrophe. I am afraid that even Mrs. Vernon's aversion to the country is far from novel; and Mr. Colman, more accustomed to the stage than I am, would certainly think so. Nebuchadnezer's repartees of 'Very well, thank you!' and bringing in Philip, when bidden to *go for a rascal*, are printed in the *Terrae Filius*[1], and, I believe, in other jest books; and therefore had better be omitted.

I flatter myself, Sir, you will excuse these remarks; as they are intended kindly, both for your reputation and interest, and to prevent their being made by the manager, or audience, or your friends the reviewers. I am ready to propose your piece to Mr. Colman at any time; but, as I have sincerely an opinion of your parts and talents, it is the part of a friend to wish you to be very correct, especially in a first piece; for, such is the ill-nature of mankind, and their want of judgement too, that, if a new author does not succeed in a first attempt on the stage, a prejudice is contracted against him, and may be fatal to others of his

LETTER 2498.—[1] A series of papers by Nicholas Amhurst (1697-1742), written chiefly with a view to satirizing the University of Oxford.

productions, which might have prospered, had that bias not been taken. An established writer for the stage may venture almost any idleness; but a first essay is very different.

Shall I send you your piece, Sir; and how? As Mr. Colman's theatre will not open till next summer, you will have full time to make any alterations you please. I mean, if you should think any of my observations well founded, and which perhaps are very trifling. I have little opinion of my own sagacity as a critic, nor love to make objections; nor should have taken so much liberty with you, if you had not pressed it. I am sure in me it is a mark of regard, and which I never pay to an indifferent author: my admiration of your essay on medals was natural, uninvited, and certainly unaffected. My acquaintance with you since, Sir, has confirmed my opinion of your good sense, and interested me in behalf of your works; and, having lived so long in the world myself, if my experience can be of any service to you, I cannot withhold it when you ask it; at the same time leaving you perfectly at liberty to reject it, if not adopted by your own judgement. The experience of old age is very likely to be balanced by the weaknesses incident to that age. I have not, however, its positiveness yet; and willingly abandon my criticism to the vigour of your judgement.

2499. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 30, 1784.

I do not recollect having ever been so totally at a stand for want of matter since our correspondence began. The Duchess of Gloucester, in her last to me, told me that my letters contain nothing but excuses for having nothing to say; so, you see, my silence is not particular to you. I can only appeal to my usual vouchers, the newspapers, who let

no event escape them; and I defy you to produce one they have told you that was worth knowing. I cannot fill my paper, as they do, with air-balloons; which, though ranked with the invention of navigation, appear to me as childish as the flying kites of schoolboys. I have not stirred a step to see one; consequently, have not paid a guinea for gazing at one, which I might have seen by only looking up into the air. An Italian, one Lunardi[1], is the first *airgonaut* that has mounted into the clouds in this country. So far from respecting him as a Jason, I was very angry with him: he had full right to venture his own neck, but none to risk the poor cat, who, not having proved a martyr, is at least better entitled to be a confessor than her master Dædalus. I was even disappointed *after* his expedition had been prosperous: you must know, I have no ideas of space: when I heard how wonderfully he had soared, I concluded he had arrived within a stone's throw of the moon—alas! he had not ascended above a mile and a half: so pitiful an ascension degraded him totally in my conceit. As there are mountains twice as high, what signifies flying, if you do not rise above the top of the earth? any one on foot may walk higher than this man-eagle! Well! now you know all that I know—and was it worth telling?

There does seem to be a storm still brewing in Ireland, though a favourable turn has happened. The people of property have found out there is no joke in putting votes into the hands of the Catholics. They were Irish heads that did not make that discovery a little sooner. Can there be a greater absurdity than Papists voting for members of

LETTER 2499.—[1] Vincenzo Lunardi (d. 1806), secretary to the Neapolitan Ambassador in London, ascended from the Artillery Ground in London on Sept. 15, 1784, taking with him a pigeon, a dog, and a cat. The cat, which suffered from the cold, was landed on his first descent at South Mimms in Hertfordshire. He finally descended safely at Standon near Ware.

Parliament? It will be well for those who invited them to that participation, if they can satisfy them without granting it! How often I reflect on my father's *Quieta non movere*! It seems to me, from all I have seen of late years, to be the soundest maxim in politics ever pronounced. Think of a reformation of Parliament by admitting Roman Catholics to vote at elections! and that that preposterous idea should have been adopted by Presbyterians! That it was sanctified by a Protestant bishop[2] is not strange; *he* would call Mussulmen to poll, were there any within the diocese of Derry.

Your Lord Paramount seems to be taking large strides towards Holland[3]; but of that you probably know more than I do,—at least, you cannot know less. The old gentlewomen in my neighbourhood, the only company I have, study no map but that of *tendre* in Clelia; but they relate the adventures of that country in a different style from Mademoiselle Scudéry; they put as many couple together, but not quite with such honourable intentions as she did. In short, you may perceive that I can send you no intelligence but folly and lies from newspapers, or scandal from beldams; I do not listen to the latter, nor mind the former. I pay you my monthly quit-rent, though in truth it is not worth a pepper-corn.

Sir William Hamilton, just before he set out, gave me a small printed account of the *Reale Galleria di Firenze accresciuta*, &c. By it I perceive, that, though the Great Duke has dispersed the group of the Niobe like our Riot Act, and left them staring in strange attitudes like the mob on such an occasion, he has assembled all the outlying parts of the Medicean collection[4], and made great purchases himself and new-arranged the whole. This is praiseworthy, but

[2] Dr. Frederic Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry. *Walpole.*

[3] The Emperor Joseph II quarrelled with the Dutch for the navigation of the Scheldt. *Walpole.*

[4] Particularly from the Villa Medici at Rome. *Walpole.*

seems a little contradicted by selling so much of the *Guardaroba*; not that *I* blame him I am sure, who, thanks to you, have profited by it. The little book promises an ampler account. Should such appear, I should be glad to have it, on strict condition of paying for it; otherwise, you know you exclude me from troubling you with any commission: my house is full of your spoils already, and by your magnificence is a *Galleria Reale* itself.

I shall now be expecting your nephew soon, and, I trust, with a perfectly good account of you. The next time he visits you, I may be able to send you a description of my *Galleria*,—I have long been preparing it, and it is almost finished,—with some prints, which, however, I doubt, will convey no very adequate idea of it. In the first place, they are but moderately executed: I could not afford to pay our principal engravers, whose prices are equal to, nay, far above, those of former capital painters. In the next, as there is a solemnity in the house, of which the cuts will give you an idea, they cannot add the gay variety of the scene without, which is very different from every side, and almost from every chamber, and makes a most agreeable contrast; the house being placed almost in an elbow of the Thames, which surrounds half, and consequently beautifies three of the aspects. Then my little hill, and diminutive enough it is, gazes up to royal Richmond; and Twickenham on the left, and Kingston Wick on the right, are seen across bends of the river, which on each hand appears like a Lilliputian seaport. Swans, cows, sheep, coaches, post-chaises, carts, horsemen, and foot-passengers are continually in view. The fourth scene is a large common field, a constant prospect of harvest and its stages, traversed under my windows by the great road to Hampton Court; in short, an animated view of the country. These moving pictures compensate the conventual gloom of the inside; which, however, when the sun

shines, is gorgeous, as he appears all crimson and gold and azure through the painted glass. Now, to be quite fair, you must turn the perspective, and look at this vision through the diminishing end of the telescope; for nothing is so small as the whole, and even Mount Richmond would not reach up to Fiesole's shoe-buckle. If your nephew is still with you, he will confirm the truth of all the pomp, and all the humility, of my description. I grieve that you would never come and cast an eye on it!—But are even our visions pure from annoy? Does not some drawback always hang over them? and, being visions, how rapidly must not they fleet away! Yes, yes; our smiles and our tears are almost as transient as the lustre of the morning and the shadows of the evening, and almost as frequently interchanged. Our passions form airy balloons—we know not how to *direct* them; and the very inflammable matter that transports them, often makes the bubble burst. Adieu!

2500. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 6, 1784.

You have accepted my remarks with great good humour, Sir; I wish you may not have paid too much regard to them; and I should be glad that you did not rest any alterations on my single judgement, to which I have but little respect myself. I have not thought often on theatric performances, and of late not at all. A chief ground of my observations on your piece proceeded from having taken notice that an English audience is apt to be struck with some familiar sound, though there is nothing ridiculous in the passage, and fall into a foolish laugh, that often proves fatal to the author. Such was my objection to *hot-cockles*. You have, indeed, convinced me that I did not enough attend to your piece, as a *farce*; and, you must excuse me,

my regard for you and your wit made me consider it rather as a short comedy. Very probably too, I have retained the pedantic impressions of the French, and demanded more observance of their rules than is necessary or just: yet I myself have often condemned their too delicate rigour. Nay, I have wished that farce and speaking harlequins were more encouraged; in order to leave open a wider field of invention to writers for the stage. Of late I have amply had my wish: Mr. O'Keeffe has brought our audiences to bear with every extravagance; and, were there not such irresistible humour in his utmost daring, it would be impossible to deny that he has passed even beyond the limits of nonsense. But I confine this approbation to his *Agreeable Surprise*. In his other pieces there is much more untempered nonsense than humour. Even that favourite performance I wondered that Mr. Colman dared to produce.

Your remark, that a piece full of marked characters would be void of nature, is most just. This is so strongly my opinion, that I thought it a great fault in Miss Burney's *Cecilia*, though it has a thousand other beauties, that she has laboured far too much to make all her personages talk always in character; whereas, in the present refined or depraved state of human nature, most people endeavour to conceal their real character, not to display it. A professional man, as a pedantic fellow of a college or a seaman, has a characteristic dialect; but that is very different from continually *letting out* his ruling passion.

This brings me, Sir, to the alteration you offer in the personage of Mrs. Winter, whom you wittily propose to turn into a mermaid. I approve the idea much: I like too the restoration of Mrs. Vernon to a plain reasonable woman. She will be a contrast to the bad characters, and but a gradation to produce Barbara, without making her too glaringly bright without any intermediate shade. In truth, as you

certainly may write excellently if you please, I wish you to bestow your utmost abilities on whatever you give to the public. I am wrong when I would have a farce as chaste and sober as a comedy; but I would have a farce made as good as it can be. I do not know *how* that is to be accomplished; but I believe you do. You are so obliging as to offer to accept a song of mine, if I have one by me. Dear Sir, I have no more talent for writing a song than for writing an ode like Dryden's or Gray's. It is a talent *per se*; and given, like every other branch of genius, by nature alone. Poor Shenstone was labouring through his whole life to write a perfect song, and, in my opinion at least, never once succeeded; not better than Pope did in a St. Cecilian ode. I doubt whether we have not gone a long, long way beyond the possibility of writing a good song. All the words in the language have been so often employed on simple images (without which a song cannot be good), and such reams of bad verses have been produced in that kind, that I question whether true simplicity itself could please now. At least we are not likely to have any such thing. Our present choir of poetic virgins write in the other extreme. They colour their compositions so highly with choice and dainty phrases, that their own dresses are not more fantastic and romantic. Their nightingales make as many divisions as Italian singers. But this is wandering from the subject; and, while I only meant to tell you what I could not do myself, I am telling you what others do ill. I will yet hazard one other opinion, though relative to composition in general. There are two periods favourable to poets: a rude age, when a genius may hazard anything, and when nothing has been forestalled: the other is, when, after ages of barbarism and incorrection, a master or two produces models formed by purity and taste; Virgil, Horace, Boileau, Corneille, Racine, Pope, exploded the licentiousness

that reigned before them. What happened? Nobody dared to write in contradiction to the severity established; and very few had abilities to rival their masters. Insipidity ensues, novelty is dangerous, and bombast usurps the throne which had been debased by a race of *fainéants*. This rhapsody will probably convince you, Sir, how much you was mistaken in setting any value on my judgement.

February will certainly be time enough for your piece to be finished. I again beg you, Sir, to pay no deference to my criticisms, against your own cool reflections. It is prudent to consult others before one ventures on publication; but every single person is as liable to be erroneous as an author. An elderly man, as he gains experience, acquires prejudices too: nay, old age has generally two faults; it is too quick-sighted into the faults of the time being, and too blind to the faults that reigned in his own youth, which, having partaken of or having admired, though injudiciously, he recollects with complacence.

I confess, too, that there must be two distinct views in writers for the stage, one of which is more allowable to them than to other authors. The one is durable fame; the other, peculiar to dramatic authors, the view of writing to the present taste (and, perhaps as you say, to the level of the audience). I do not mean for the sake of profit; but even high comedy must risk a little of its immortality by consulting the ruling taste; and thence comedy always loses some of its beauties, the transient, and some of its intelligibility. Like its harsher sister, satire, many of its allusions must vanish, as the objects it aims at correcting cease to be in vogue; and, perhaps, that cessation, the natural death of fashion, is often ascribed by an author to his own reproofs. Ladies would have left off patching on the Whig or Tory side of their face, though Mr. Addison had not written his

excellent *Spectator*[1]. Probably even they who might be corrected by his reprimand, adopted some new distinction as ridiculous; not discovering that his satire was levelled at their partial animosity, and not at the mode of placing their patches; for, unfortunately, as the world cannot be cured of being foolish, a preacher who eradicates one folly does but make room for some other.

2501. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 15, 1784.

As I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself Lady Aylesbury mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon; I suppose Blanchard's[1], that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and, after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts*: only

Letter 2500.—[1] No. 81.

Letter 2501.—[1] François Blanchard (1753-1809) ascended from Chelsea on Oct. 16, 1784 (see *Gent. Mag.* 1784, p. 792—the date, Oct. 15, of this letter must be a mistake), accompanied by Mr. Sheldon (see note 3), a surgeon, who left the balloon when it descended (as Walpole supposed) at Sunbury. Blanchard reascended and came down at Romsey in Hampshire.

t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the gentleman that used to write political ship-news, in that style which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next, I discovered an alliance between Bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of an universal language; the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages*; and Salisbury Plain, Newmarket Heath (another canvass for alteration of ideas), and all downs (but *the* Downs) arising into dockyards for aerial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations. But to come to my ship-news:—

'The good balloon Dædalus, Captain Wing-ate, will fly in a few days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

'Arrived on Brand Sands, the Vulture, Captain Nabob; the Tortoise snow, from Lapland; the Pet-en-l'air, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from Mount Etna, Sir W. Hamilton, commander; the Tympany, Montgolfier[2]; and the Mine-A-in-a-bandbox, from the Cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from Mount

[2] The brothers Joseph Michel and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier were inventors of the balloons known as *Montgolfières*. They first ascended in public on June 5, 1782, at Annonay in France.

Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon[3], took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phœnix is to be cut down to a second-rate.'

In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless. But enough of my fooleries; for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

2502. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 23, 1784.

It is very true, Madam, we are robbed in the face of the sun, as well as at the going down thereof. I know not how other districts fare, but for five miles round us we are in perpetual jeopardy. Two of our justices, returning from a cabinet council of their own, at Brentford, were robbed last week, before three o'clock, at the gates of Twickenham: no wonder; I believe they are all hoodwinked like their *Alma Mater* herself, and, consequently, as they cannot see, it is not surprising that both she and they should often weigh out their goods with uneven scales.

Being perfectly secure of not having given your Ladyship any cause of offence, I did conclude that one reason of your silence must be the topic[1] to which you allude, and on which you could not like to write after you knew that I had absolutely nothing to do in the affair. I was certainly as little desirous of renewing a theme which terminated as I had foreseen, and as, in the only conversation I had with the person concerned[2], I foretold it would; the last words

[3] John Sheldon (1752–1808), said to have been the first Englishman to ascend in a balloon.

Letter 2502.—[1] Probably the engagement of Lord Euston and Lady Maria Waldegrave.

[2] Apparently Lady Maria, who was advised by Horace Walpole (see letter

I said to her being to warn her to be prepared for such an event. You may then well believe, Madam, that it cannot be my wish to revive a subject so little agreeable.

I am acquainted with Mrs. Allanson[3], and have very great esteem for her, and could tell your Ladyship her history, were it not too long for a letter. Her conduct has been noble and reasonable; her patroness's, in my opinion, preposterous at least. The female disciples of that school, which is not that of Pythagoras, the mistress resembling him in nothing but in a thigh of solid gold, are loud in her defence. I hope Mr. Pulteney will protect Mrs. Allanson by the same substantial arguments.

I cannot unlock Mr. Powis's[4] charade. It may be a very good something, but does not seem to be a charade, which used to be formed of a first part, a second, and a whole. Now I did not know that *character* was the whole of anybody or anything.

Balloons is a subject I do not intend to tap. If they can be improved into anything more than Brobdingnag kites, it must be in a century or two after I shall be laid low. A century, in my acceptation, means a hundred years hence, or a year or two hence, for after one ceases to be, all duration is of the same length; and everything that one guesses will happen after oneself is no more, is equally a vision. Visions I loved while they decked with rain-

to Lady Ossory of Nov. 17, 1784) to break off the engagement, which was disapproved of by the Duke of Grafton, father of Lord Euston.

[3] Mrs. Alison, not Allanson:—Dorothea, daughter of Dr. John Gregory, Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh University, on whose death (in 1773) she went to reside with Mrs. Montagu (the 'patroness' mentioned above). Miss Gregory married (June 14, 1784) the Rev. Archibald Alison (1757–1839), by whom she was the mother of Sir Archibald Alison the historian. Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Johnstone-Pulteney presented Mr. Alison to a living in 1790.

[4] Probably Rev. Thomas Powys (1736–1809), Rector of Fawley, afterwards (1797) Dean of Canterbury. His verses are mentioned in the *Diaries* of his sister-in-law Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys (London, 1899). As a neighbour of General Conway, with whom he was on friendly terms, Mr. Powys was probably known to Horace Walpole.

bows or concealed the clouds of the horizon before me; but now that the dream is so near to an end, I have no occasion for lesser pageants—much less for divining with what airy vehicles the atmosphere will be peopled hereafter, or how much more expeditiously the east, west, or south will be ravaged and butchered, than they have been by the old-fashioned clumsy method of navigation.

It is true, I do not shut my eyes to the follies actually before them. I smile at the adoration paid to these aerial Quixotes; and reflect that, as formerly, men were admired for their courage in risking their lives in order to destroy others; now they are worshipped for venturing their necks *en pure perte*—much more commendably, I do allow; yet fame is the equal object of both. I smile, too, at the stupidity that pays a guinea for being allowed to see what any man may see by holding up his head and looking at the sky: and I observe that no improvements of science or knowledge make the world a jot wiser; knowledge, like reason, being a fine tool that will give an exquisite polish or finishing to ornaments; but is not strong enough to answer the common occasions of mankind.

2503. To John Pinkerton.

Oct. 27, 1784.

I would not answer your letter, Sir, till I could tell you that I had put your play into Mr. Colman's hands, which I have done. He desired my consent to his carrying it into the country to read it deliberately: you shall know as soon as I receive his determination.

I am much obliged to you for the many civil and kind expressions in your letter, and for the friendly information you give me. Partiality, I fear, dictated the former; but the last I can only ascribe to the goodness of your heart.

I have published nothing of any size but the pieces you mention, and one or two small tracts now out of print and forgotten. The rest have been prefaces to some of my Strawberry editions, and to a few other publications; and some fugitive pieces which I reprinted several years ago in a small volume, and which shall be at your service, with the *Catalogue of Noble Authors.*

With regard to the bookseller who has taken the pains to collect my writings for an edition (amongst which I do not doubt but he will generously bestow on me many that I did not *write*, according to the liberal practice of such compilers), and who also intends to write my life, to which (as I never did anything worthy of the notice of the public he must likewise be a volunteer contributor), it would be vain for me to endeavour to prevent such a design. Whoever has been so unadvised as to throw himself on the public, must pay such a tax in a pamphlet or magazine when he dies; but, happily, the insects that prey on carrion are still more short-lived than the carcasses were, from which they draw their nutriment. Those momentary abortions live but a day, and are thrust aside by like embryos. Literary characters, when not illustrious, are known only to a few literary men; and, amidst the world of books, few readers can come to my share. Printing, that secures existence (in libraries) to indifferent authors of any bulk, is like those cases of Egyptian mummies which in catacombs preserve bodies of one knows not whom, and which are scribbled over with characters that nobody attempts to read, till nobody understands the language in which they were written.

I believe therefore it will be most wise to swim for a moment on the passing current, secure that it will soon hurry me into the ocean where all things are forgotten. To appoint a biographer is to bespeak a panegyric; and I doubt

whether they who collect their works for the public, and, like me, are conscious of no intrinsic worth, do but beg mankind to accept of talents (whatever they were) in lieu of virtues. To anticipate spurious publications by a comprehensive and authentic one, is almost as great an evil: it is giving a body to scattered atoms; and such an act in one's old age is declaring a fondness for the indiscretions of youth, or for the trifles of an age, which, though more mature, is only the less excusable. It is most true, Sir, that, so far from being prejudiced in favour of my own writings, I am persuaded that, had I thought early as I think now, I should never have appeared as an author. Age, frequent illness and pain, have given me as many hours of reflection in the intervals of the two latter, as the two latter have disabled from reflection; and, besides their showing me the inutility of all our little views, they have suggested an observation that I love to encourage in myself from the rationality of it. I have learnt and have practised the humiliating task of comparing myself with great authors; and that comparison has annihilated all the flattery that self-love could suggest. I know how trifling my own writings are, and how far below the standard that constitutes excellence: as for the shades that distinguish the degrees of mediocrity, they are not worth discrimination; and he must be very modest, or easily satisfied, who can be content to glimmer for an instant a little more than his brethren glow-worms. Mine, therefore, you find, Sir, is not humility, but pride. When young, I wished for fame, not examining whether I was capable of attaining it, nor considering in what lights fame was desirable. There are two sorts of honest fame; *that* attendant on the truly great, and that better sort that is due to the good. I fear I did not aim at the latter; nor discovered, till too late, that I could not compass the former. Having neglected the

best road, and having, instead of the other, strolled into a narrow path that led to no good worth seeking, I see the idleness of my journey, and hold it more graceful to abandon my wanderings to chance or oblivion, than to mark solicitude for trifles, which I think so myself.

I beg your pardon for talking so much of myself; but an answer was due to the unmerited attention which you have paid to my writings. I turn with more pleasure to speak on yours. Forgive me if I shall blame you, whether you either abandon your intention, or are too impatient to execute it[1]. Your preface proves that you are capable of treating the subject ably; but allow me to repeat, that it is a work that ought not to be performed impetuously. A mere recapitulation of authenticated facts would be dry; a more enlarged plan would demand much acquaintance with the characters of the actors, and with the probable sources of measures. The present time is accustomed to details and anecdotes; and the age immediately preceding one's own is less known to any man than the history of any other period. You are young enough, Sir, to collect information on many particulars that will occur in your progress, from living actors, at least from their cotemporaries; and, great as your ardour may be, you will find yourself delayed by the want of materials, and by farther necessary inquiries. As you have variety of talents, why should not you exercise them on works that will admit of more rapidity; and at the same time, in leisure moments, commence, digest, and enrich your plan by collecting new matter for it?

In one word, I have too much zeal for your credit, not to dissuade you from precipitation in a work of the kind you meditate. That I speak sincerely you are sure, as accident,

Letter 2503.—[1] Pinkerton proposed to write a history of the reign of George II.

not design, made you acquainted with my admiration of your tract on medals. If I wish to delay your history, it must be from wishing that it may appear with more advantages; and I must speak disinterestedly, as my age will not allow me to hope to see it, if not finished soon. I should not forgive myself if I turned you from prosecution of your work; but, as I am certain that my writings can have given you no opinion of my having sound and deep judgement, pray follow your own, and allow no merit but that of sincerity and zeal to the sentiments of your

Obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2504. To SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 1, 1784.

YOU are one of the last men in the world to be comforted by a legacy for the loss of a friend; nor can one see it in any agreeable light, but as a testimony of real affection. An old friend is a double loss when oneself is not young. However, it is the frequent untying of such strings that accustoms one to one's own departure. The patriarchs might preserve a relish for life, even when five hundred years old; because their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were all upon as lasting an establishment; and, I suppose, the affections of the ancestry were as vivacious as themselves. But, in the post-diluvian system, long-lived parents are often more unfortunate than we old bachelors, and survive their children. For my part, who have outlived some friends and most of my cotemporaries, I am attached to being but by few threads. I see little difference between living in Otaheite, and with new generations. Small advantage has one in the latter intercourse, but in not having an unknown language to learn; nay, one

has part of a new tongue to practise when there is a distance of fifty years between the two vocabularies. My dear old friend, Madame du Deffand, often said she did not understand modern French. Swift was out of humour with many words coined in his own time;—a common foible with elderly men, who seem to think that everything was in perfection when they entered the world, and could not be altered but for the worse.

Thank you for the account of the arrival of the Duchess of Albany[1]. It is one of the last chapters of the house of Stuart; whose history—tarry but a little—may be written, like that of the Medici. The episode of the Princess of Stolberg[2] is more proper for an Atalantis. Such anecdotes, however, come within my compass, who live too much out of the world to know what bigger monarchs are doing. Newspapers tell me your Lord Paramount[3] is going to annihilate that fictitious state, Holland. I shall not be surprised if he, France, and Prussia divide it, like Poland, in order to settle the Republic! perhaps may create a kingdom for the Prince of Orange out of the Hague and five miles round.

LETTER 2504.—[1] Mann writes on Oct. 18, 1784:—'The arrival of Lady Charlotte Stuart, Duchess of Albany, has occasioned some little bustle in the town. A French lady, who for thirty years had been totally neglected, but who, on a sudden, was transformed into a Duchess, was an object that excited the curiosity of both sexes—of the men, to see her figure; of the ladies to scrupulously examine *that*, and the new modes she has brought from Paris. The result of all which is, that she is allowed to be of a good figure, tall and well made, but that the features of her face resemble too much those of her father to be handsome. She is gay, lively, very affable, and has the behaviour of a well-bred French-woman, without assuming the least distinction among our ladies on account of her new dignity.' (*Mann and Manners*, vol. ii. p. 408.)

[2] The Pretender's wife, daughter of the Prince of Stolberg, and great-grand-daughter of the outlawed Earl of Ailesbury, who died at Brussels. The Countess of Albany was separated from her husband on account of his ill-usage, and was supposed to like Count Alfieri (the poet), a Piedmontese gentleman, who had been in England, where he fought a duel with the second Lord Ligonier, on having an intrigue with his wife, who was daughter of Lord Rivers, and who was soon after divorced. *Walpole.*

[3] The Emperor Joseph II.

Your nephew, though arrived, I have not yet seen; he is in Kent with his daughters. The new Signora Mozzi I should think not enchanted with her husband's *passing eldest* on the wedding-night. She will take care not to choose a philosopher for her second.

This scrap, which in reality is but a reply to some paragraphs in yours, gives itself the denomination of a letter, to keep up the decorum of regularity, which idle veterans have no excuse for neglecting, and often practise mechanically. I began it last night 'because I had nothing else to do, and quitted it because I had nothing more to say'; which was the whole of a letter from a French lady to her husband, and in which there was humour, as she was more indifferent to him than I am to you. Now I do resume it, I find it not so convenient; for my hand shakes, being very nervous in a morning. It might shake for another reason, which I should not disguise if the true one; for nothing is so foolish as concealing one's age, since one cannot deceive the only person who can care whether one is a year or two older or younger—oneself. That secrecy convinces me, amongst other reasons, that nothing is falser than the common maxim, that no one knows himself. Whom the deuce should one know, if not the person one sees the oftenest and observes the most, and who has not a thought but one knows? Elderly women, who repair their faces, prove they discover the decay; and yet flatter them that others will not discover the alteration which even repairs make. I should think that a daily looking-glass and conscience would leave neither women nor men ignorant of themselves. We are silly animals! even our wisdom but consists in remarks on the follies of others, if not on our own; and, as we are of the same species, we are sure of not being exempt: for myself, I am clear that I was born, and shall die, with no exclusive patent!

2505. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 8, 1784.

As I wrote to you but a week ago, don't imagine from another so soon that I have anything fresh to tell you. On the contrary, I only write to answer a letter of very antique date from you, which I received from your nephew yesterday, with the parcel of mine. I questioned him strictly, as usual; and his account of you is very good. He says you are sometimes languid in a morning; but was not you so in the century when we were together? If he described *me* as justly to you, you must think me the Old Man of the Mountain. But what signify languors or wrinkles if one does not suffer pain, nor has a mind that wishes to be younger than its body? that is, if one is neither miserable nor ridiculous, it is no matter what the register says. Your nephew seems much benefited by his journey; and I encourage him to renew them frequently, for both your sakes.

You tell me—but it was on the 11th of September when you told me so—that Cavalier Mozzi had not received the general acquittance from Mr. Hoare. If still not received, he should write to Mr. Hoare or Sharpe. I have taken my leave and cannot recommence.

You surprise me with the notice that old Ramsey had a hand in trumpery[1]. I do not mean that I wonder at his being a bad poet—I did not know he was one at all, though a very great scribbler; but an old dotard! to be sporting and playing at leap-frog with brats.

I came to town yesterday to bespeak some winter clothes, and hear that the Emperor has marched threescore thousand men towards Holland. We shall now feel a fresh conse-

Letter 2505.—[1] The Arno Miscellany. *Walpole.*

quence of the blessed American war! It begot the late war with Holland; the remaining animosity of which, and our present impotence, will prevent us from defending the Dutch: and thence, when Austria, as well as France, are grown great maritime powers, we shall be a single one, and probably the weakest of the three! But as I never meddle with the book of futurity, and its commentators' guesses, I leave that matter to younger readers.

Ireland, as far as my spare intelligence extends, is a little come to its senses. Landed property, though no genius, has discovered that Popery, if admitted to a community of votes, would be apt to inquire into the old titles of estates; and to remember that prescription never holds against any Church militant, especially not against the Church of Rome. You know I have ever been averse to toleration of an intolerant religion. I have frequently talked myself hoarse, with many of my best friends, on the impossibility of satisfying *Irish* Catholics without restoring their estates. It was particularly silly to revive the subject in this age, when Popery was so rapidly declining. The world had the felicity to see that fashion passing away—for modes of religion are but graver fashions; nor will anything but contradiction keep fashion up. Its inconvenience is discovered, if let alone; or, as women say of their gowns, *it is cut and turned*, or variety is sought; and some mantua-maker or priest, that wants business, invents a new mode, which takes the faster, the more it inverts its predecessor. I shall not wonder if Cæsar, after ravaging, or dividing, or seizing half Europe, should grow devout, and give it some novel religion of his own manufacture.

I have had as many disputes on the reformation of Parliament. I do not love removing landmarks. Whether it is the leaven of which my pap was made, or whether my father's *Quieta non movere* is irradicable, experiments are not

to my taste; but I find I am talking 'about it and about it,' because I really have nothing to tell you, and know nothing. I do worse than live out of the world, for I live with the old women of my neighbourhood. I read little, not bestowing my eyes without an object. In short, I am perfectly idle; and such a glutton of my tranquillity, that I had rather do nothing than discompose it. I would *go out* quietly; and, as one is sure of being forgotten the moment one is gone, it is as well to anticipate oblivion.

2506. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 12, 1784.

It happens to me now, Madam, as I suppose it does to most who have intervals in their correspondence: when they come to write, their letters must be a patchwork of discordant affections—if affections they have; so chequered are the events of human life! If I turn to one side of my mind, it is all sunshine and joy, on the Queen's goodness to Lord Waldegrave[1]; if to the other, what true sorrow for the death of Lady Drogheda[2]! She was really as perfect as a mortal could be. Her piety, though rigid, was so sweet! her understanding she had cultivated herself; it was as deep as it was improved. She had a concise and comprehensive eloquence, that summed up the newest and most just reflections in the compass of a short sentence; from the mouth of an ancient sage they would have been handed down as maxims. The gentle and harmonious tone of her voice, the captivating graces of her manner, and the

Letter 2506.—[1] George, fourth Earl Waldegrave (husband of Horace Walpole's great-niece), who had lately succeeded his father in the earldom. Queen Charlotte had made him her Master of the Horse, in succession to his father.

[2] Lady Anne Seymour Conway (d. Nov. 4, 1784), eldest daughter of the first Earl of Hertford; m. (1766) Charles Moore, sixth Earl (afterwards first Marquis) of Drogheda.

blushes that accompanied all she said—for her resolution of speaking when it was proper, was for ever combating her bashfulness—made such an assemblage of attraction, that she appeared more beautiful than she was in reality—but it was the beauty of a modest saint. Her firmness was equal to her other qualities: perceiving that in fondness to her son she equalled her mother, she sent him from her to England for his education. She has been carried off in six days by a bilious disorder, leaving a miserable husband, whom, though doting on her, she could not preserve from ruining his health and fortune by drink and play, four or five daughters, to whom her loss is irreparable, a family of brothers and sisters, who idolized her, and a most fond father, to whom this blow will recall the death of her mother, exactly at this time two years ago. I never saw General Conway so much struck as when he brought me the news.

This indulgence to my own sensations will not compensate to your Ladyship for the story of Mrs. A.[3]; but that indeed I am not entirely at liberty to write, as there are some circumstances which, though highly to her honour, are not proper for the post. In lieu I can tell you a curious anecdote of the King of Sweden. When last at Florence, he found the Count of Albany in a wretched condition, destitute even of an exchequer to pay his household. He imparted his sympathy *at the Opera*—to whom, think you, Madam? only to the minister of the Count's rival—who, with his usual readiness and propriety, replied that he supposed the subsidy his Majesty said he intended to bestow on his poor compeer, was mentioned to *him* as a hint to sound whether it would not be offensive to a brother monarch. He accepted that idea: then proposed to make a free gift of 1,000*l.*—to be followed by a like benevolence

[3] Mrs. Alison; see note 3 on letter to Lady Ossory of Oct. 23, 1784.

in six months, and an annual donative of more than both. You expect next no doubt to hear, Madam, that the good ship *Guilderstern* arrived at Leghorn loaded with copper-money—*pas encore.* The modern Gustavus desired the English resident to advance the money, for which he would give him a draft on the mines of Dalecarlia. Having received no such instructions, the minister[4] desired to be excused; and somehow or other the treasurer is not yet arrived. On the contrary, as the new Duchess of Albany will inherit jewels and effects to the amount of at least 100,000*l.*, it is said that one of the royal Dukes of Ostrogothia or Vandalmania[5] is to marry her; but this I do not warrant. I had the whole story from the younger Sir Horace, who is just come to England. The elder is too discreet ever to send *me* such anecdotes of the Porphyrogeniti.

You tell me, Madam, the humours of the Prince of Wales and his new comrade, old Slender; nay, but they are not of my calibre. I kissed the hand of George I, and do not look to the revels of his great-great-grandson. My life has been protracted long beyond the term that my weak frame seemed to promise; yet, having lived long, is no reason for expecting to live much longer. I amuse the remnant by recollection, not by guessing at futurity; for, though memory is a shadow, it is at least a more substantial one than hope or foresight.

I have seen Mr. Duane, who is feeble indeed, but his head is clear; and his appetite for buying curiosities still alert; consequently I am much more superannuated, for I find *that* passion has taken its flight too!

[4] Sir Horace Mann, English minister at Florence.

[5] For Sudermania, by a *jeu de mots.* The Dukes of Ostrogothia and Sudermania were brothers of the King of Sweden.

2507. To Miss Hannah More.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 13, 1784.

Thank you a thousand times, dear Madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brillianted by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed, can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in Alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pied de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many* carats.

Seriously, Madam, I am surprised—and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female[1]. Her ear, as you remark, is perfect; but that, being a gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes. Her not being learned is another reason

Letter 2507.—[1] Mrs. Anne Yearsley (1756–1806), the 'Bristol milkwoman.' Mrs. Yearsley's poetical talents were brought to Hannah More's notice by her cook. She helped the milkwoman to publish her poems by subscription, and collected a sum of money for her which was invested in the names of trustees —Hannah More and Mrs. Montagu. Mrs. Yearsley objected to this arrangement, and quarrelled with Hannah More. In later life she kept a circulating library at Bristol, and wrote a tragedy, *Earl Godwin*, which was acted at Bristol and Bath.

against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay, all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language, and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, Madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late Queen patronized Stephen Duck[2], who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artisans and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poetess can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of your least excellences, Madam (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her counsels for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What if I should go a step farther, dear Madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as *The Castle of Otranto*? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than

[2] The thresher-poet. Queen Caroline made him keeper of her library at Richmond. He took orders in 1746, and committed suicide in a fit of dejection in 1756.

to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's *Cock and Fox*, the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's *Eton Ode* and *Churchyard*. Prior's *Solomon* (for I doubt his *Alma*, though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too sombre. The flimsy giantry of Ossian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset House are crowded with Brobdingnag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the *Blue-stocking Club*. If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, Madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt? And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you see proper? And though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippocrene for Pactolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Anybody, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend in Clarges Street[3]; she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-stocking* yourself and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and, though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, Madam, has never been privileged.

I am, with the sincerest regard, Madam,
Your much obliged and obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2508. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 17, 1784.

NATURALLY, Madam, I should rejoice on a favourite niece being married to a young lord of the great rank, character, and figure of Lord Euston; and much more, on my family's acquiring the honour of alliance with your Ladyship's; yet that satisfaction is much abated by the circumstance of the Duke of Grafton's disapprobation. I am not fond of matches where any proper consent is wanting. Still I flatter myself that as my niece's birth, fortune, and character made her in every light a suitable party, except for his Grace's younger children, Lord Euston will not be thought to have made a very ineligible choice; and I do hope that Lady Ravensworth and your Ladyship do not condemn him. It does please me to recollect that I have often talked to you, when I could not have the most glimmering idea of such an event, of the uncommon understanding of Lady Euston. The dignity of her conduct on the wretched behaviour of Lord Egremont did deserve

[3] Mrs. Vesey.

a man of nobler principles; and fate has amply compensated by giving her one who has acted as honourably as the other meanly. I am not likely to see the consequences; it would grieve me should they prove what are threatened; but I will venture to foretell that if sense and sweetness of temper can constitute the chief felicity of a husband, Lord Euston will not be unhappy. Still, he will do me the justice to say, that in the only interview I have had the honour of having with him since the marriage was in question, I told him nobody could advise him to risk his father's displeasure. I have most strictly adhered to that declaration; and when I saw my niece the next day (the sole time I have seen her since) I entreated her to break off the connection entirely. This justification I owe to the long friendship, Madam, with which you have honoured me: it is not due to any one else, nor should I condescend to make it but to you. However flattered I may be by the alliance, I would not have obtained it by staking Lord Euston's fortune, nor by shocking a father's authority, however harshly, and I think unreasonably, exerted. A letter from Lady Waldegrave this morning acquainted me that the marriage was solemnized yesterday.

I am in utter ignorance of anything else that could help out a letter. The papers tell me that the Dutch are drowning their country to save it[1]. It puts me in mind of an old Pagan parable. The priests of the god of fire and those of the god of water agreed on a duel between their principals —what a pity *that* etiquette has been disused! The aquatic champion was clad, for armour, in a jug, bored with holes stopped by wax. Emperor Flame advanced with all the fervour of his element: Mynheer Neptune received the

LETTER 2508.—[1] The Dutch, in view of the Emperor's military preparations, prepared to flood their country. On the night of Nov. 7, 1784, they made a breach in one of the dykes near Lillo, a fort on the Scheldt.

onset with *sang-froid*; Cæsar pushed on; the wax dissolved, an inundation burst forth—and Vulcan was extinguished—and so be it! How the imperial vulture of Russia must long to extend a talon, and carry off a limb of another republic!

Since I adjusted the affair between Lord Orford and Cav. Mozzi, I have heard nothing of Mr. Morice, who was then at Ischia, and better, and, as he always is, whether better or worse, in good spirits.

Pray, Madam, revere Uncle Methusalem; Lord Euston makes the fifty-sixth of my nephews, nieces, and great-nephews and nieces. Two Fitzroys will not stop the lengthening of the line, if it does not break off at the other end!

2509. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 20, 1784.

In obedience to your Ladyship's commands, I write a few words. I certainly cannot disapprove anything you say on the present occasion. Much less do I disagree with you in thinking that any fervour on your Ladyship's part would but do hurt. Indeed, the only part I take myself is to recommend perfect silence, which I shall strictly observe myself. I told Lady Euston my opinion, as it was my duty; both when she told me of the proposal, and when I thought it entirely broken off. When anything is over, though contrary to one's opinion, good nature, as well as good sense, bids one take the favourable side. My disposition always inclines me to be partial to young people and young passions; and, therefore, it was no effort to exchange prudence for kind wishes. Mine are so very barren, that I am not even likely to see them fulfilled, should they ever be!

I could only vary my expressions, Madam, if I wrote more on this subject; nor should I have said so much but to you. When one can do no service, silence is the only *succedaneum.*

2510. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Sunday night, Nov. 28, 1784.

I have received the parcel of papers you sent me[1], which I conclude come from Lord Strafford, and will apply them as well as I possibly can, you may be sure, but with little hope of doing any good; humanity is no match for cruelty. There are now and then such angelic beings as Mr. Hanway[2] and Mr. Howard[3]; but our race in general is pestilently bad and malevolent. I have been these two years wishing to promote my excellent friend Mr. Porter's plan for alleviating the woes of chimney-sweepers, but never could make impression on three people; on the contrary, have generally caused a smile.

George Conway's intelligence of hostilities commenced between the Dutch and Imperialists makes me suppose that France will support the former—or could they resist? Yet I had heard that France would not. Some have thought, as I have done, that a combination of partition would happen between Austria, France, and Prussia, the modern law of nations for avoiding wars. I know nothing: so my

Letter 2510.—[1] Against cruelty to dogs. *Walpole.*

[2] Jonas Hanway (1712–1786), one of the founders of the Marine Society, started to supply seamen for the navy. He was also a Governor of the Foundling Hospital, where he introduced useful reforms. Among other benevolent objects he was interested in the improvement of the London highways, the condition of pauper children and chimney-sweepers, and the establishment of Sunday schools. He published an account of his *Travels* when in the employ of a Russia merchant, wrote against the use of tea, and is said to have been the first person to walk with an umbrella in the streets of London.

[3] John Howard (d. 1790), the prison reformer.

conjectures may all be erroneous; especially as one argues from reason; a very inadequate judge, as it leaves passions, caprices, and accidents out of its calculation. It does not seem the interest of France that the Emperor's power should increase in their neighbourhood and extend to the sea. Consequently it is France's interest to protect Holland in concert with Prussia. This last is a transient power, and may determine on the death of the present King; but the Imperial is a permanent force, and must be the enemy of France, however present connections may incline the scale.

In any case, I hope we shall noway be hooked into the quarrel; not only from the impotence of our circumstances, but as I think it would decide the loss of Ireland, which seems tranquillizing: but should we have any bickering with France, she would renew the manœuvres she practised so fatally in America. These are my politics; I do not know with whose they coincide or disagree, nor does it signify a straw. Nothing will depend on my opinion; nor have I any opinion about them, but when I have nothing at all to do that amuses me more, or nothing else to fill a letter.

I can give you a sample of my idleness, which may divert Lady Aylesbury and your academy of arts and sciences for a minute in the evening. It came into my head yesterday to send a card to Lady Lyttelton, to ask when she would be in town; here it is in an heroic epistle:—

From a castle as vast as the castles on signs,—
From a hill that all Africa's molehills outshines,
This epistle is sent to a cottage so small,
That the door cannot ope if you stand in the hall,
To a lady who would be fifteen, if her knight
And old swain were as young as Methusalem quite:
It comes to inquire, not whether her eyes
Are as radiant as ever, but how many sighs

He must vent to the rocks and the echoes around
(Though nor echo nor rock in the parish is found),
Before she, obdurate, his passion will meet—
His passion to see her in Portugal Street?

As the sixth line goes rather too near the core, do not give a copy of it: however, I should be sorry if it displeased; though I do not believe it will, but be taken with good humour as it was meant[4].

2511. To Thomas Walpole the Younger.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 2, 1784.

I was a little surprised, I confess, dear Sir, at not hearing a word from you since your arrival in Germany, not even to tell me how you liked your situation. I was more surprised when your cousin told me you did not know whether you *might* write to me. That sounded a strange expression to so near a relation, to one who flattered himself that he had always shown the warmest disposition to be your friend, to one with whom you had corresponded familiarly, and to one who is a most insignificant old man, and who can have no pretensions to respect, unless from the trist precedence of old age. I am no Aulic counsellor, and have not a quarter in my coat of arms more than you. But there is an end of etiquette; my answer to your cousin showed my perfect good humour; we will never say a word more on the subject, but write, as we used to do, when we have anything to say.

That condition indeed seems to admit of difficulties.

[4] Miss Berry notes:—'It was taken in perfect good humour; and she returned the following answer, which Mr. Walpole owned was better than his address:

"Remember'd (tho' old) by a wit and a beau!
I shall fancy, ere long, I'm a Ninon l'Enclos.
I must feel impatient such kindness to meet,
And shall hasten my flight into Portugal Street.

"Ripley Cottage, 28th Nov."'

Letter 2511.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 82–6.

I have been here these six months in utter ignorance, living in a small neighbourhood, composed chiefly of gossiping old women, to whom I do not listen, and seeing neither politicians nor fashionable people, so I neither know what passes in the grave world or in the gay one. The Duchess of Gloucester tells me that my letters are composed of nothing but excuses for having nothing to tell her. She and you should recollect that sixty-seven is no very amusing age.

I am sorry that your time at a very different period is not better diverted. Not being very diplomatic, I am ashamed I know nothing of your Elector[1] but the good you tell me of him. But I will consult Lady Mary Coke, who is better acquainted than the Heralds' Office with Europe *vivante et mourante.* I should think you might ask leave to make little jaunts to different courts. You are not likely, I trust, to be employed in hiring mercenaries. At least, you have an auctioneer[2] in the neighbourhood, who, though bidding less, may leave you no business of that sort. As one, at least, of his aquiline beaks is always prowling for prey, our coffee-houses are in expectation of hearing he has begun his breakfast. Lord George Gordon would fain go fowling against him. But, as his Lordship's sole skill lies in raising a conflagration, I imagine an inundation will be more serviceable.

If you make any tours, your pencil will add to your pleasure. If you would send me a slight drawing of your Elector, I should be glad. Keep a journal of all you hear and see. I speak very disinterestedly, God knows. But, if you live, as I hope you will, to my age, it will be a kind of recall of youth, and bring back a thousand passages you would else forget, but be glad to remember. Your brother's

[1] Charles Theodore, Elector Palatine and Elector of Bavaria; d. 1799.
[2] The Emperor Joseph II.

company, which I am glad you have, though sorry he has leisure to give it, would make little jaunts doubly agreeable.

Pray don't give yourself any particular trouble about the amber box. Though in my second childhood, I am no longer very eager about toys, with which I have little time left to play. I am in no haste, and whenever the box comes, I shall be equally obliged to you.

This letter would have set out sooner, but you are in one respect so little yet of a minister in a German court, that you had omitted all dates of place and time, and I was forced to write to your cousin for a direction. Or perhaps, though so old fashioned myself, our Maccaronic omission of all useless usages may have penetrated into the Holy Roman Empire. I dare not send my compliments to your brother, lest it should look formal to remember anybody. And this shall be the last time I will make a ceremonious conclusion to my letter, if Ratisbon has adopted the contrary practice. Till you tell me so, I will beg leave to be, dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2512. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 2, 1784.

You must not be surprised at a little inertness in my correspondence, though not yet trespassing on my regularity, when you consider the season of the year, the tranquillity of the times, and my age, which confines itself to a few elderly folk, as retired from the world as myself. Though the depth of winter, I am not yet settled in town; though I now and then lie here for a night or two, to diversify the scene, and not to live totally in the country, the air of which does not agree with me so well as that of London, purified by a million of fires.

I can tell you nothing but what the *Gazette* has anticipated—two or three promotions, and the creation of two Marquises[1]; meagre articles after three wars, and as many revolutions of administrations! This enormous capital, that must have some occupation, is most innocently amused with those philosophic playthings, air-balloons. But, as half a million of people that impassion themselves for any object are always more childish than children, the good souls of London are much fonder of the *airgonauts* than of the toys themselves. Lunardi, the Neapolitan secretary, is said to have bought three or four thousand pounds in the stocks, by exhibiting his person, his balloon, and his dog and cat, at the Pantheon for a shilling each visitor. Blanchard, a Frenchman, is his rival; and I expect that they will soon have an air-fight in the clouds, like a stork and a kite.

I do not know half so much of the war between the Austrian eagle and the frogs, though they say it grows very serious. The latter began the attack by a deluge[2]: but that war is like a theatric tragedy; the principal actors seldom appear in the first scenes; the second act may be opened by France and Prussia.

There has been another Fitzroyal match[3] in my family. . . .[4] Lord Euston[5] has married my niece, Lady Maria Waldegrave, the Duchess of Gloucester's daughter. . . .[6] The bride has every possible merit—merit put to the test by that wretch Lord Egremont[7]; and on him she is thus nobly revenged. Lord Euston has behaved with as much honour as the other wanted.

LETTER 2512.—[1] Earl Temple, made Marquis of Buckingham; and the Earl of Shelburne, Marquis of Lansdowne. *Walpole.*

[2] By opening the dykes. *Walpole.*

[3] Between Mr. Fitzroy, eldest son of Lord Southampton, and Miss Laura Keppel. *Walpole.*

[4] Sentence erased in MS.

[5] Eldest son of Augustus Henry, Duke of Grafton. *Walpole.*

[6] Sentence erased in MS.

[7] Who had been engaged to her. *Walpole.*

Dec. 5th.

As your court is so linked with Vienna, I suppose it looks steadfastly towards the Scheldt; though perhaps as much in the dark as the village of Twickenham, whither I am returned. Your holy neighbour, no doubt, rejoices that Huguenot commerce is thought a preferable morsel to the temporalities of the Church, which I suspect to have been a weighty ingredient in Cæsar's late reformations[8], as they were in Luther's. Nor will he squander them, as Henry the Eighth did, on his courtiers. Modern conquests, too, as well as reformations, are grown to have more substantial views than anciently, when fame and glory were the chief incentives. I do not recollect reading that, when Alexander vanquished Porus, he loaded elephants with diamonds and lacks of rupees. Since the world grew wiser, Thomas Kouli Kan carried off all the brilliants and rubies of the Mogul's golden throne; ay, and I dare to swear, the gold too. Why is so much of America, yet unpeopled, unknown? but because no hero expects to find mines in cold and desolate regions. If air-balloons could reach the moon, I believe the first inquiry of philosophers would be after *the specie* in the planet. Otaheite and all the Owyhees, and New Holland and New Zealand, will be left to return to their primitive obscurity, because they have nothing more intrinsic than hogs and red feathers. Yet science pretended to make the expedition! Science is perfectly content with the very little it has learnt. The sublime legislatress of Russia, who has millions and millions of acres more than she knows what to do with, has more appetite for the plunder of Constantinople, than for peopling and civilizing the tracts of globe she possesses as far as China. Dr. Young was not a little mistaken when he imagined that 'the universal passion' of mankind was fame.

[8] Destruction of convents. *Walpole.*

9th, Berkeley Square again.

I saw a gentleman this morning who had just received a letter from his brother at Paris, which says that France is determined to defend the Dutch, and is preparing to march two armies, under Broglio and Maillebois, one of which is destined to Alsace. I don't pretend to guess whether that interposition will prevent or extend war. *The time when* is of consequence only to those in being; and, therefore, there is more meaning than appears at first in our form of prayer, 'Give peace in *our* time, O Lord!' The world will never be long free from that scourge, war; and whether the passions put on the mask, or throw it off, mankind will be equally sacrificed. Adieu!

2513. To Samuel Ireland[1].

Sir, Berkeley Square, Dec. 2, 1784.

I came to town but yesterday evening and found the favour of your letter and the two beautiful prints, for which I give you many thanks. I am very grateful too for the honour you offer me of an inscription, which you will forgive me for declining. They deserve far more illustrious names than that of an obsolete old man, who lives quite out of the world, and has had no connection with an university for half a century.

The offer and the request granted will be a double obligation, Sir, to

Your most obedient and
Most grateful humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2513.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. G. Locker-Lampson, Rowfant, Crawley, Sussex.

[1] Samuel Ireland (d. 1800), engraver, father of the forger William Henry Ireland.

2514. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 9, 1784.

I can answer Lady Anne's salique query very easily, Madam, or rather I cannot; but I believe that, even when Edward VI died, there was not a single prince living who descended in the direct male line from any king since the Conquest. Numerous as were the sons of Edward III, only Thomas, Duke of Gloucester[1], continued the masculine line, and I cannot (upon memory alone) affirm that. If he did, the Duke of Buckingham, beheaded by Henry VIII, had, *saliquely* speaking, the best title to the crown. The Beauforts are doubly illegitimate, being descended from a bastard of one of John of Ghent's legitimated issue. I doubt, therefore, whether enacting the salique law here would not, in any period, have been a dangerous measure; at least, I know nowhere of an uninterrupted male genealogy of genuine princes but in Wales; and it would occasion an inundation of civil wars, before the Heralds' Office could settle which Mr. Price, or which Mr. Williams, or which Mr. Philipps, is the genuine heir of our true British princes.

I am sure I do not mean to arrogate a right in myself, nor pretend to say how near I stand to the crown; but I have a pedigree of my mother, drawn up by the late Sir John Philipps, my cousin, and father of the present Lord Milford, in which it is clear that we are descended from Cadwallader. I really do not believe Sir John had any ambitious views himself, for, though he gave himself all that trouble, I believe it was only meant as a compli-

Letter 2514. — [1] The Duke of Gloucester left a son who died unmarried. The Duke of Buckingham represented Gloucester's daughter, Anne, Countess of Stafford.

ment to his cousin, the wife of the then Prime Minister, or, at most, a hint to her that so noble a prince ought to be, at least, a Commissioner of the Customs; and I am the more inclined to acquit his Royal Highness, my cousin, of any intention of disturbing the established succession from personal views, as (from no resentment, I believe, for not obtaining a place in the Custom House) he became a very zealous and active Jacobite, and, at last, died in very good odour with his present Majesty.

Thus you see, Madam, whichever way I turn myself, I have royal or Fitzroyal connections; and yet, however beneficial it might be to me and my relations on Cadwallader's side, I cannot come into your Ladyship's scheme of a salique law here. At least I hope you will repeal the Marriage Act first—for two reasons; one, that our present princes may have as many lawful male heirs as possible; and the other, that our princesses may not be forced to scamper to Gretna Green, in order to supply the crown with heirs,—which they would not do, if their children were not *habile* to succeed.

I luckily arrived in town the eve of dreadful yesterday[2]. I came for my *waiting* to-night in Cavendish Square[3], and did mean to return to Strawberry to-morrow, and thence go on Saturday to Park Place; but since Boreas and Æolus, and all the demons of the air, are let loose, I shall keep myself as warm as I can, and not venture being laid up with the gout and compounded in snow as I was some years ago at Ampthill, and then forced to have a track hewn for me by the charity of my hosts.

May I beg to consult your Ladyship on a case of conscience? I think I ought to wait on Lady Ravensworth on a late event; and yet I am so afraid of doing a wrong or

[2] Between Dec. 5 and 8 there were tremendous gales, accompanied by snow and hail.

[3] Where the Princess Amelia lived.

seemingly impertinent thing, that I have not ventured yet. Pray tell me seriously whether I should or not.

I have neither seen *The Carmelite*[4] nor Holman[5], nor anything, or almost anybody else. You don't consider that I was a contemporary of Dugdale and Ashmole, that I am or ought to be superannuated, and that I know no more of the present generation, than if Deucalion and Pyrrha had just tossed them over their shoulders and restocked the earth. Alas! I have lost most of those that used to inhabit it in my days! and a teacupful of deluge would wash me away too.

2515. To Dr. Warton.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 9, 1784.

I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for your repeated kindness and communications; and was much pleased at the sight of both the letters of Voltaire and Mr. Windham, which I return with thanks and gratitude. Both are curious in different ways. Voltaire's English would be good English in any other foreigner; but a man who gave himself the air of criticizing our—and, I will say, the world's—greatest author, ought to have been a better master of our language, though this letter and his commentary prove that he could neither write it nor read it accurately and intelligently.

That little triumph, however, I shall decline; I mean, I will make no use of his letter. It would be a still poorer scrap than it is, if curtailed; and I would by no means be accessory to printing the first part, in which I am happy to find you agree with me. Indeed, it would be publishing scandal, and to the vexation of an innocent gentleman.

[4] A tragedy by Cumberland, recently produced at Drury Lane.

[5] Joseph George Holman (1764–1817), actor and dramatist. On Oct. 24, 1784, he made his *début* at Covent Garden as Romeo.

I condemn exceedingly all publication of private letters in which living persons are named. I thought it scandalous to print Lord Chesterfield's and President Montesquieu's letters. It is cruel to the writers, cruel to the persons named, and is a practice that would destroy private intercourse in a great measure. What father could venture to warn his son against the company of such or such a person if it were likely that a Curll or a Mrs. Stanhope would print his letter with the names at length? I detained my own fourth volume of *Painters* for nine years, though there is certainly no abuse in it, lest it should not satisfy the children of some of those artists.

Still I am far, Sir, from carrying this delicacy so far as some expect. I would respect the characters of the living, and the feelings of their children. I should not have so much management for their grandchildren, who may have a full portion of pride about their ancestry, but certainly have very rarely a grain of affectionate tenderness for them. I did give much offence to some persons who yearned with those genealogic duties, by my *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*: but I did not care a straw. Indeed, if every bad man who has had the honour of being great-grandfather to some one or other was to be spared for fear of shocking his noble descendants, history would be as fulsome as dedications were some years ago. Philip II was ancestor to half the monarchs of Europe, may not he be branded as a monster without offence to their majesties?

The anecdote on Pollio in the other letter did not at all surprise me. Indeed, does not the late *Diary* teem with instances of similar growth? Nor is it any longer strange that Lord Melcombe should leave such a proof of his own—I know not what to call it! Has not he seemed proud of recording his own variations, and contradictions, and flattery?

I will say no more on that subject, Sir, but turn to another in which *you* are more interested. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for last month there is a pretended discovery of the name of the unfortunate lady to whose memory Mr. Pope wrote his Elegy. The writer of that communication corroborates too the circumstance of the sword. But I believe he is quite mistaken in both; at least, my Lady Hervey, who was acquainted with Pope, and who lived at the time, gave me a very different name, and told me the exit was made in a less dignified manner—by the rope[1]. I have never spread this, from the reasons I have given you in the former part of the letter: I do not know but some of the family may be living—nor is one bound to tell the world all one knows. I shall not have the same reserve to you, Sir, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, which I am glad to hear will be soon. I am, Sir,

Your grateful and most obedient servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2516. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 27, 1784.

I am told that I am in a prodigious fine way; which, being translated into plain English, means, that I have suffered more sharp pain these two days than in all the moderate fits together that I have had for these last nine years: however, Madam, I have one great blessing, there is

LETTER 2515.—[1] The writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1784, pt. ii. p. 807) states that the lady's name was Scudamore, and that she stabbed herself with a sword. In his MS. notes in Pope's Works (printed in 1876 from the copy in possession of Sir William Fraser) Horace Walpole writes:—'The name of this lady was *Withinbury*, pronounced Winbury: the seat of her family was *Chiras Court*, vulgarly *Cheney's Court*, situated under Frome Hill, and forming nearly a triangle with Home Lacy and Hampton Lucy. It is said that she did not stab but hang herself.' Warton's note on this subject, in his edition of Pope's Works, seems to have been based upon information derived from Horace Walpole.

drowsiness in all the square hollows of the red-hot bars of the gridiron on which I lie, so that I scream and fall asleep by turns like a babe that is cutting its first teeth. I can add nothing to this exact account, which I only send in obedience to your Ladyship's commands, which I received just now: I did think on Saturday that the worst was over.

2517. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 3, 1785.

I am much obliged to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory: I am essentially better, and quite contented, for my pains are gone. It is not so easy to recover what I had not—strength; and, consequently, I am as low and languid as possible; but having no occasion for myself, I am very indifferent about the little progress I make. I return your Ladyship's New Year's compliments with wishes, I hope, better founded.

2518. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 4, 1785.

I had the great satisfaction last week of receiving your letter, my dear Sir, written with your own hand to confirm the progress of your recovery; but I was not able to answer it myself, being confined to my bed by a severe fit of the gout too. I could only dictate a few lines to your nephew, to beg he would express my joy and thanks to you, and tell you why I did not write myself. Indeed, he had the kindness to send me word that he had received one too from you by the same post, and with the same good news. Poor young man! while you thought him fox-hunting, he was prisoner also to the same illness, but less slight than ours. I told him we formed a triangle of gouty correspondence.

I have since received another from you, of December 18th:

but, indeed, I have not wanted consolations, for Monsieur de Soyres sent me word from Florence of your amendment, and Lord and Lady Mount-Edgcumbe have been so friendly as to furnish me constantly with the accounts they received of you from their son—a clear proof that he was satisfied with the marks of attention you was capable of giving him. I have not seen them yet; for, like you, I have not been allowed to see company and talk, nor, indeed, could I to be heard. Though I have never had the gout in my stomach, yet my breast is so weak that it is always the part principally affected, and, consequently, whence I conclude my dissolution will come. You, I fear, have suffered dreadfully, though you do not say so: your patience, and calmness, and good humour are just what they were five-and-forty years ago. I am happy that your stamina are as strong too as they were: they must be to have weathered such an attack! Indeed, I have great comfort in your tranquillity and resignation about the event. I, who have gone through so many more of these assaults, who wonder how I have stood them, and who always expect the next to be the conclusive one, have often called it dying *à plusieurs reprises*. I am not impatient for what *must* happen; but, when one has *tried on* death so often, it must be more familiar to one. Could I choose, it should come at once at the beginning of a fit: I dread the ceremonial, and to know one's house is full of relations and inquirers. My exit, I hope, will be in the country; there I always keep my illness as secret as I can.

You perceive I am writing to you with a lame hand, and with the only one I have at liberty; the other, muffled up, just holds my paper. I am now weary, and shall go to bed; but, knowing I could not write much at once, I had the precaution to begin my letter three days before the post, and shall add to it at leisure.

5th.

I resume my letter, rather to finish than to add to it. A correspondence between two sick bedchambers at the distance of a thousand miles must be very lifeless. What news can we tell one another but how we rested last night? and that last night will have been a fortnight ago when the post arrives. Kings and empresses, of whom we were forced to talk from want of reciprocal acquaintance in our several residences, must be out of our thoughts: can we care what interludes they are playing when we are quitting the theatre? We see them in their true light, and know that they too, in a little time, must leave their crowns and sceptres to be worn by other performers.

The pantomime carrying on at Florence and Rome is entertaining. So, the Pope who would not grant the title of King to the Pretender, allows his no-Majesty to have created a Duchess; and the Cardinal of York, who is but a ray of the Papacy, and who must think his brother a King, will not allow her title! Well! it is well they have not power to do worse, nor can spill the blood of others in their foolish squabbles.

Lord Mount-Edgcumbe has been here this evening. I assure you, it is impossible to be more satisfied than he is with your attentions to his son; who has written, that, to the last moment of his stay at Florence, there was no mark of friendship you omitted, nor any services you did not render him. I know better than they can, how much he was obliged to you.—Jesus! attentions for travelling boys when one is on the rack! Oh, my dear Sir, I will recommend no more to you, lest they should find you in a fit of the gout. You never did too little, but often too much, and more than your health and constitution could bear. Adieu!

2518*. To the Duc de Nivernais.

Monsr. le Duc,

Though painful illness has been all my real crime, still I almost feel the unhappiness of the guilty on not having yet attempted to express my thanks for the honour you have done me[1]—but surely you cannot have thought me intentionally culpable. If ill-breeding or indolence neglect their duty on receiving obligations, yet vanity is never ungrateful; it finds its own interest gratified in proclaiming the favours it receives. You have done more for me than I could achieve for myself; you have made me speak the universal language—would not a Carthaginian author have been proud to have had his work familiarized at Rome by the pen of Scipio?

As you have proved, M. le Duc, how perfectly you understand English, it would be very ungrateful in me to mangle your language in return, and though my own will not furnish me with terms adequate to my sensations, I will not weaken them by turning them into French; you alone can improve what you translate.

My surprise, my satisfaction, at finding my own composition make so agreeable an appearance, are not to be described. I *was* surprised, though acquainted with the talents of the Duc de Nivernois; but though I knew how

Letter 2518*.—Not in C.; now first printed from facsimile (supplied by Mr. Lewis Buddy III of the Kirgate Press, Canton, Pennsylvania, through the good offices of Mrs. Alice Morse Earle) of original in the handwriting of Thomas Kirgate, Horace Walpole's printer and secretary, in the possession of the Princeton University Library, U.S.A. The numerous corrections in the MS. show that this is a rough draft of the letter. Walpole was prevented from using his own hand by an attack of gout, as appears from the letter itself.

[1] Reference is made throughout this letter to the translation by the Duc de Nivernais of Horace Walpole's *Essay on Modern Gardening*. The translation and essay, on opposite pages, were printed at Strawberry Hill in the autumn of this year.

eloquently he could express his own thoughts, could I imagine that he could transmute mine into gold too? Oh, but I found as I proceeded, that he could effect much more, he could make Milton, our great Milton, write as correct and beautiful French verse as Boileau himself—if I was ashamed that the successor of La Fontaine[2] should have thrown away some valuable moments on translating me, how much more did I regret that those moments had not been employed on larger versions of the beautiful parts of *Paradise Lost*! Yes, M. le Duc—Milton himself, when you meet in Elysium, will reproach you with not having made all Europe acquainted with his sublime poetry—and if he is just, he will confess that you could have accomplished what he failed in, you could have *regained Paradise* to all who do not understand English.

These reflections have sometimes augmented, sometimes soothed my sufferings for three weeks. The very night on which Mrs. Buller[3] delivered your invaluable present to me, I was forced to leave her abruptly from increase of pain, having been seized by the gout three days before; and though self-love and impatience could not prevent my reading the whole the next morning, my hands have been ever since so swelled and incapable of writing, and my head so little in a state of application for more than a few minutes at a time, that after begging Mrs. Buller to represent my misfortune, I preferred waiting till I could dictate a few lines for myself.

You are so modest, M. le Duc, as to ask my pardon—what is it possible I should resent, but your conferring an obligation which I can never return? A jeweller can give lustre to rude stones by cutting them into brilliants;

[2] The Duc de Nivernais wrote fables.

[3] Mary, daughter of John Hippisley Coxe, of Stone Easton, Somersetshire; m. (as his second wife) James Buller, of Downes, Devonshire, who died in 1772.

but brilliants can receive no farther splendour, and can owe nothing to any new setting.

With equal condescension, M. le Duc, you give me leave to make corrections in your version of my essay. As a proof of my obedience, I will point out the single passage in your translation in which, on the strictest comparison, I can discover that you have not completely rendered my meaning. It is in p. 26, in these words: 'heureusement Kent[4] et quelques autres n'ont pas été tout à fait si timides, et nous pourrons à présent monter et descendre par des rampes en plein air.' Instead of the last phrase, I meant to say 'sans quoi nous aurions encore aujourd'hui à monter et à descendre par des rampes en plein air.' You will correct my French, if I have made myself understood.

There is one other little alteration in the disposition of my words, which, though no error, makes me give an opinion which I did not mean. I have said that *fountains and cypresses peculiarly become buildings*; the translation says '*les fontaines entourées de cyprès*'—but though each separately are graceful ornaments to architecture, I should not recommend the latter to surround the former.

These slight changes are all that the partial eye of self-love could wish made in so beautiful a translation—but that eye, to be strictly just, ought to point out several passages which have been improved and embellished by the translator, but it would be writing a commentary, not a letter, were I to specify all the particulars.

There are a few trifling errors in the notes that in conformity to your commands, M. le Duc, I will remark.

In page 8, it should be said that Theobalds belonged to James the First, not James the Second.

P. 9. Warwick Castle is situated *au bout de la ville* de Warwick.

[4] William Kent, the artist and landscape gardener.

P. 14. Au lieu de *Quand mon père s'est marié*, lisez *Quand mon frère.*

P. 27. *Sir Harry Beaumont*, nom supposé que prit M. Spence dans plusieurs de ses ouvrages.

P. 31. Le jardin de mon père fut planté par M. Eyre il y a plus de *soixante* ans.

P. 47. Mons. *Whateley* was the author of the observations on gardening.

P. 49. Petworth is in *Sussex*, not Surry.

P. 54. Lord *Nuneham* is now Lord *Harcourt.* Park Place is near *Henley*, not Chatham.

These, M. le Duc, are all the changes I can discover as necessary: unless, perhaps, a note were added toward the conclusion, to explain that the essay is but part of a larger work on painting[5], or else the recapitulation seems to have nothing to do with the history of gardening.

I wish the Duc de Nivernois would baptize the new style by a simple term. I confess I never could please myself with one. I have suggested one for a designer of modern gardens, and which has been approved, and will suit as well in French and English. To distinguish him from the *gardener*, I would call him *gardenist*, in French *jardiniste.*

I fear I have said too much, though I can never satisfy myself or think I have sufficiently expressed my gratitude for the honour I have received—yet how unreasonable is vanity when once the bridle is thrown on its neck! Can it resist so natural an impulse as that of wishing that this charming translation was published?—But no, it would be presumption to hope it when the author of so many exquisite fables still withholds them from the press! True genius, like virtue and charity, is content with the consciousness of its own merits—in virtue it is allowable—but ought not charity to contribute to the felicity of others?

[5] *Anecdotes of Painting.*

Forgive this tedious discourse, M. le Duc, and impute some of its faults to my present weakness, and to a mind uneasy till it had expressed a little of its gratitude and admiration, and who knew not whether it should ever have an opportunity of even returning its thanks. I have the honour to be, with the highest respect, M. le Duc,

Your most obliged and most devoted humble servant.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 6, 1785.

2519. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Jan. 13, 1784 [1785].

I can just use one hand enough slowly to scratch out a few thanks to your Ladyship for your very kind notification. Indeed, I had heard the agreeable news yesterday; and also that the Duke had sent word to Lord Euston by Mr. Pratt that he will continue his allowance. I am heartily glad; not being of so romantic an age as to believe that love and a cottage compose very durable felicity. The Duke of Grafton has certainly acted very temperately. It would be most unjust to say that a father has not cause to be displeased at his child marrying against his consent. That he will be satisfied with Lady Euston, if she ever has the happiness of being known to him, I am persuaded. I do not know so perfect a young woman; she has all her father's sense and temper, and the utmost discretion. They who spread absurd stories about her had not one of the three. I know some of them; they are hags of high rank; they bestow Sunday mornings on church, and the rest of the year on scandal, malice, envy, and lies of their neighbours: and their neighbours are those of the Gospel, the first that falls in their way. Three of those pious Furies

Letter 2519. — Hitherto placed among letters of 1784, but evidently written in 1785. (See *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 18, 1897.)

are sisters, and their names the Ladies Tisiphone, Megæra, and Alecto [1].

I can say to-day, Madam, that I do believe my gout is going. One of the fogs, or the eternal fog, gave me cold last week, and my pains returned a little. From being foolhardy, I am grown such a coward, that I do not believe I shall venture to moult a single wrapper this age.

You see the *airgonauts* have passed the Rubicon [2]. By their own account they were exactly birds; they flew through the air, perched on the top of a tree, some passengers climbed up and took them in their nest. The smugglers, I suppose, will be the first that will improve on the plan. However, if the project is ever brought to any perfection (though I apprehend it will be addled, like the ship that was to live under water and never came up again), it will have a different fate from other discoveries, whose inventors are not known. In this age all that is done (as well as what is never done) is so faithfully recorded, that every improvement will be registered chronologically. Mr. Blanchard's trip to Calais puts me in mind of Dryden's Indian emperor:

> What divine monsters, O ye gods, are these,
> That float in air, and fly upon the seas!

Dryden little thought that he was prophetically describing something more exactly than ships as conceived by Mexicans. If there is no air-sickness, and I were to go to Paris again, I would prefer a balloon to the packet-boat, and had as lief roost in an oak as sleep in a French inn, though I were to caw for my breakfast like the young ravens.

This is a volume for me, Madam, and my hand must lie down and take a nap.

[1] Lady Greenwich, Lady Betty Mackenzie, and Lady Mary Coke?

[2] Blanchard and Jeffries crossed the Channel from Dover on Jan. 7, 1785. They descended in the forest of Guines.

2519*. To the Duc de Nivernais.

Having had a dangerous relapse, it was impossible for me, M. le Duc, to express my thanks as soon as I wished, for the great pleasure I felt at the gracious consent you have condescended to give to my press being honoured by printing your translation. I had, I confess, formed that ambitious wish—but my vanity was not bold enough to let it pass my lips. I was conscious that I was already but too nobly distinguished by having the Duc de Nivernois for my translator, and the author's pride was humbly content to flatter itself that some time or other the beautiful merit of the version would dispel all impediments and break out and shine in public.

Intoxicated as I am with this new condescension, believe me, M. le Duc, self-love is not the sole ingredient of my satisfaction. You intimate some intention of bestowing more of your happy talent in translation on an English author, infinitely more worthy of employing your pen; and more congenial as he was a capital poet. When the specimens you have given from Milton shall appear in the *Essay on Gardening*, France will demand more from your hand, and I shall be pardoned for having misemployed your moments, since I have been the occasion of your country's hearing that you owe it the brightest use of all your powers —and your country never did, nor ever will, ask services from you in vain.

It would be superfluous to say with how much joy I

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embrace the offer of printing the translation at Strawberry Hill—though aware of all the difficulties that will attend the execution in the manner I would wish. My printer is totally ignorant of the French language, which must make him proceed very slowly. I not only ought but will revise and correct every page myself, which, besides my printing-house being in the country, will prevent my beginning the impression till I am settled at Strawberry Hill, whither I go in June.

The interval, however, allows me to ask a great favour, in order that I may produce an edition as little unworthy of the work as shall be in my power. The copy I had the honour of receiving is written in such very small characters that my printer, unaccustomed to French manuscript, would make endless mistakes and confusion. Might I take the liberty of begging that the Duc de Nivernois would order one of his secretaries to send me another copy transcribed in a very large and distinct hand of both the text and notes, with stops and accents exactly as he would please to have the whole printed? I could not even trust my own diligence and attention without this assistance.

Perhaps I am going to use greater and too great freedom: Mrs. Buller communicated to me a correction of four of the lines translated from Milton. I do not at all pretend to judge which are the better as French poetry—but an English ear cannot help being prejudiced in favour of the first translation. *Canal*, I am aware, has not the same precise signification in French as in English. To the former I know it implies no more than a current—with us it is confined to signify a strait *pond*, which is one of the ingredients of ancient gardens which the modern taste most condemns, and when followed by the words *qui, sans se détourner*, seems more strongly to convey the idea of a lineal canal. This, I confess, is a mere English objection;

yet I own too that *un fleuve profond* sounds to me more nobly poetic than *un large canal*. *Clôture du jardin* is also, to my imagination, more bold and Miltonic than *se perd sous un mont*—but this criticism I offer with timidity and humility; and submit with proper deference to the better judgement of a true French poet and critic.

I have the honour to be, with the utmost respect and gratitude, the Duc de Nivernois's

Most obliged and most devoted
Humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

London, Berkeley Square, Feb. 1st, 1785.

2520. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 2, 1785.

I WOULD not write to you again, my dear Sir, till I could tell you that I was quite recovered; and that I could not say with any truth till within these few days, for I had a relapse, of which I was much worse than from the first attack. The gout passed out of my limbs into my bowels, was sent back, changed itself into a cough, and fell on my lungs: but all are gone, and I am so well, that I should have taken the air to-day in my coach if it had not been too hard a frost. In short, we are both met again on this side of the world; for one may call it *meeting*, as an Englishman and a Frenchman would seem countrymen if they met in the deserts of Tartary: formerly one should have said, in India; but *there* the two nations have proved that they are not such familiar friends.

Your last would have made me uneasy by your still remaining in bed, had it not all been written by your own hand; and had not you kindly foreseen my apprehension, and told me kindly, I hope truly, that you remained there

only in complaisance to your physician. We are both deceptions: who that saw *you* in your youth, or *me* from my infancy till now, would have believed that we should live, after men grown, to correspond for four-and-forty years? For my part, I suppose that Hercules, if he had not gone mad, would have died of a consumption. We have both renewed our leases, and I hope our correspondence will still become much more venerable for its longevity. We are certainly epistolary patriarchs.

To say the truth, I cannot resume the thread with much interest. Nothing has happened here during the seven weeks of my confinement worth repeating. The Parliament is met, but as quietly as a quarter session. The opposition seems quelled, or to despair; nor has the town contributed more than the two Houses to the fund of news.

The great scene that Europe expected is said to be laid aside, and that France has signified to the Dutch that they must submit to the Emperor, and that they will—happy news for one or two hundred thousand of the living! Whether the mass of murder will be diminished in future by that arrangement is another question. The revival of the kingdom of Austrian Lombardy[1] looks as if the Eagle's eastern wing would expand itself as well as the western; and so I recollect I hinted to you two years ago that I expected it would.

If the town does not do something odd and worth repeating within these two days, I must send away my letter, squab as it is. I cannot coin news, though so easy a practice, as our newspapers prove by the daily lies they publish —I will not say *invent*; for thousands, who get nothing by the manufacture, help the printers to numberless falsehoods. Our newspapers are deservedly forbidden in France for impudent scandal on the French Queen. I am always

LETTER 2520.—[1] Which is what the Emperor meditated. *Walpole.*

ashamed that such cargoes of abuse should be dispersed all over Europe; and frequently our handsomest women are the themes. What Iroquois must we seem to the rest of the world!

Feb. 4th.

London is very perverse, and will not furnish me with another paragraph; one would think it had taken spite to our immortal correspondence. Formerly, after a Long Vacation, people used to be impatient to signalize themselves by some extravagance or absurdity. They are as tame now as if the millennium was commenced.

I went out yesterday to take the air, but it fatigued me. Last night it snowed again, and I have stayed at home: but I shall recover; my appetite is perfect, and my sleep is marvellous. I don't know why I am not as sleek as a dormouse. Pray give me as good an account of yourself. Have you driven yet in your coach to the Cascines or the foot of Fiesoli? or about the streets to the Duomo and Annunziata[2], as I used to do in the heat of the day, for the mere pleasure of looking at the buildings, when everybody else was gone into bed? What a thousand years ago that was! yet I recollect it as if but yesterday! I sometimes think I have lived two or three lives. My thirteen months at Florence was a pleasant youth to one of them. Seven months and a half at Paris, with four or five journeys thither since, was a middle age, quite different from five-and-twenty years in Parliament which had preceded—and an age since! Besides, as I was an infant when my father became minister, I came into the world at five years old; knew half the remaining courts of King William and Queen Anne, or heard them talked of as fresh; being the youngest and favourite child, was carried to almost the first operas,

[2] The church of the Santissima Annunziata, in the Piazza of the same name.

kissed the hand of George the First, and am now hearing the frolics of his great-great-grandson [3];—no, all this cannot have happened in one life! I have seen a mistress of James the Second [4], the Duke of Marlborough's burial, three or four wars, the whole career, victories, and death of Lord Chatham, the loss of America, the second conflagration of London by Lord George Gordon—and yet I am not so old as Methusalem by four or five centuries!

In short, I can sit and amuse myself with my own memory, and yet find new stores at every audience that I give to it. Then, for private episodes, varieties of characters, political intrigues, literary anecdotes, &c., &c., the profusion that I remember is endless; in short, when I reflect on all I have seen, heard, read, written, the many idle hours I have passed, the nights I have wasted playing at faro, the weeks, nay months, I have spent in pain, you will not wonder that I almost think I have, like Pythagoras, been Panthoides Euphorbus [5], and have retained one memory in at least two bodies. Adieu!

2521. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 5, 1785.

I have not written lately, Madam, because I relapsed, and have been so very ill, the gout falling on my lungs, that I did not know whether before my letter could set out for Ampthill, I should not be obliged to add a postscript from another world, and send you a new direction; but I am recovered, and have even been out twice to take

[3] George, Prince of Wales. *Walpole.*

[4] Mrs. Godfrey, mother of the Duke of Berwick and Lady Waldegrave. *Walpole.*

[5] Pythagoras claimed to have formerly been the Trojan Euphorbus, son of Panthous, and in proof of his assertion took down at first sight the shield of Euphorbus from the temple of Hera.

the air. This time indeed my recovery was a little artificial, and not entirely owing to my own management and to my herculean weakness. Sir John Elliot had happened to attend my housemaid, and would not take a fee; to prevail, I pretended to talk on my own gout, and he was so tractable, and suffered me to prescribe to him what he should prescribe to me, without giving me powder of volcanoes and other hot drugs, that I continued to see him; and I do believe, that at the crisis I should not have conducted myself quite so judiciously as he did. This is making very honourable *amende* to the College whom I have always treated with contempt; but as I love my own veracity still more than my own way, I do not haggle about confessing the truth.

As I don't know that your Ladyship is particularly devoted to Hippocrates, perhaps I have tried you by my recantation; but I had nothing of more worth to tell you, and only wrote to excuse my silence.

Your aunt, Lady Dowager Gower[1], is dying of a similar accident to poor Lady Strafford's[2], in whom the mortification is said to be begun. As much as I shall pity Lord Strafford, it is impossible to be sorry for her. She had burnt off one ear, and part of the other, and was likely to lose one of her eyes.

LETTER 2521. — [1] Mary Tufton, widow of second Earl Gower; she died on Feb. 19, 1785, 'of a mortification occasioned by her clothes taking fire as she was standing by the fire three weeks ago, when her cries brought her butler to her assistance just in time to extinguish the flames by rolling her up in the carpet.' (*Gent. Mag.* 1785, pt. i. p. 158.)

[2] Anne Campbell, Countess of Strafford. 'The servants, on opening her dressing-room door, one winter's day, discovered her lying senseless against the grate, too much burned for recovery, although she lingered near a week in existence. This manner of dying was shocking; the event itself not to be regretted, as her intellects were already impaired by the epileptic disease, and she would probably have become utterly imbecile had she lived a very little longer. To poor Lord Strafford, however, it was checkmate—the loss of his all. It left him alone in the wide world; nor do I believe he ever enjoyed another moment of comfort during the few years he survived her.' (*Lady Louisa Stuart*, p. 46.) Lady Strafford died on Feb. 7, 1785.



Edmond Malone

from the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.

The news of my coffee-house, since I began my letter, is, that Lady Strathmore[3] eloped last night, taking her two maids with her; but no swain is talked of. The town, they say, is empty: it certainly does not produce its usual complement of extravagances, when one solitary elopement of a veteran madwoman is all that is at market.

2522. To Edmond Malone.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 11, 1785.

Mr. Walpole is very sorry he cannot answer the favour of Mr. Malone's obliging letter with his own hand, having had two relapses of the gout, and being still much out of order.

Mr. Walpole knows he has notes on several of the characters of Shakespeare, but they are at Strawberry Hill, and till he can go thither they cannot be got at, but as soon as he is recovered enough to go there, he will certainly look them out, and will send them to Mr. Malone, and hopes they will not be too late for his edition.

2523. To Thomas Walpole the Younger.

Dear Sir, Berkeley Square, Feb. 19, 1785.

I have been so very ill for near three months, that I could neither answer your former letter, nor that which I had the pleasure of receiving by your brother: as I begged

[3] Mary Eleanor Bowes (d. 1800), daughter and heiress of George Bowes, of Streatlam and Gibside, Durham; m. 1. (1767) John Lyon, afterwards Bowes, seventh Earl of Strathmore (who died in 1776); 2. (1777) Andrew Robinson Stoney, from whom she separated. He abducted her in 1786, but she regained her liberty. They were divorced in 1789.

Letter 2522.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. R. B. Adam, of Buffalo, N.Y.

Letter 2523.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 86–90.

him to tell you, I have yet but one hand quite free, which will prevent my saying much as I write uneasily. I give you many thanks for the drawing—it is an amiable countenance.

Were I to talk of what is uppermost in my thoughts, it would be of the severity of the weather, which checks my recovery. I call it *the year of forty winters.* The snow first appeared on the first of October, a circumstance that in my long life I never knew before. Every day almost, since, has been remarkable for two or three changes, all bad. But I do not imagine that you want a diary of the weather. Topics there are, at last, of various sorts, but rather subjects of discussion than events, and consequently not easily detailed, were I able. The chief themes are India, Ireland, and the Westminster scrutiny. I understand nothing of the two former, and elections I never in my life would attend to, having no notion of loading my head with what I should certainly mean to forget the moment the business was over.

The gay world has its affairs too as well as the grave: but I have still less to do, if possible, with what the young are doing, than with settling what is to be, when I shall be gone! I will only tell you what I cannot avoid hearing, that the Prince of Wales had given to him, and gave, five balls running last week; and it was still said that there was to be a sixth, or *Tontine,* to consist of those that should survive from the five preceding.

Poor Lady Strafford is dead after nine weeks of dreadful sufferings from falling into the fire in a fit; and the old Lady Gower is probably dead by this time by a similar accident: that is, by setting her gown in flames.

Lord Graham's intended match with Lady Jemima Ashburnham is declared. It makes my poor old friends, the Duke and Duchess of Montrose, very happy.

Your brother will probably pick up more news for you. The Duc de Chartres is again here, which may furnish some which I am not likely to know, but told with twenty lies by the newspapers.

Ten days ago there was a report that your Emperor was besieging Maestricht; but it is not believed. We had just been believing that he was exchanging countries, and like ancient Cæsars conferring new crowns.

I must now rest; I am forced to begin my letter *d'avance*, or I cannot be sure my hand will hold out, if I wait for the post day. So I have two days in bank before my letter will set out.

Sunday night, 21st.—Lady Gower is dead and puts one hundred and thirty-two persons into close mourning: some indeed will only wear black strings to their corals. The Duchess of Devonshire is once more breeding.

22nd.—My letter must set out without any more provender in its knapsack. The town, I hear, seems to be expecting some crisis: but prognostics do not always prove prophecies—at least the wisest prophets make sure of the event first, and I will imitate them.

If your Elector becomes King of *Austrasia*, as foreign letters announce, you will at least approach nearer home. I hope he will, like the Popes, take a new name too, and call himself *Childebert* or *Clotaire*. I shall feel at home too, when such titles are revived. They will accord with *my* old love. Adieu, dear Sir.

Yours most cordially,
H. W.

2524. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 5, 1785.

Your letter of the 8th of last month, telling me that your great illness had *not* been the gout, surprised me much,

as we had had no other account of it. I had indeed wondered at your being blooded for it, which is not the treatment of the gout in the stomach here. Whatever your disorder was, thank God it is gone!

For my part, I am still a prisoner, and have been so above three entire months; the longest fit I ever had but one. Indeed, the third relapse is but now going off. Relapses! no wonder! from the beginning of December we have had such a succession of vicissitudes of all kinds of bad weather as I never remember: repeated snows, severe frosts, fogs, sudden rains, and assassinating winds have made everybody ill, or kept them so. All my hope is from the almanac, which tells me that spring is at hand; yet the month of March, like the fast on the vigil of a saint's festival, is very apt to prepare one by rigour for rejoicing.

I have heard nothing lately about your nephew. I fear his holidays too are not arrived yet. His friends and mine, the poor Duke and Duchess of Montrose, are exceedingly happy: Lord Graham is just married to Lord Ashburnham's daughter[1], a pretty amiable young woman. They have long been anxious to see him settled. He is a pattern of sons, and their sole remaining comfort under such a complication of miseries as they have been and are afflicted with[2].

Though we are nearer to the promised field of battle than you are, we know no more of the Dutch war, nor whether it is to be accommodated. The politicians of our coffee-houses are easily diverted from continental objects when they have the least food at home, as is natural;

LETTER 2524. — [1] Lady Jemima Ashburnham; she died in the following year.

[2] The Duke of Montrose had been totally blind for above thirty years, was very deaf, and had lost the use of his legs. His Duchess, Lady Lucy Manners, was paralytic; and they had lost their only daughter, Lady Lucy, wife of Mr. Archibald Douglas. *Walpole.*

and we have a few topics that are not quite indifferent. The most recent, and consequently the theme of the day, is the demolition of the scrutiny for Westminster: the opposition renewed the motion for ordering the High Bailiff to make the return, and carried the question by a majority of *thirty-eight*; and yesterday he did return Lord Hood and Mr. Fox [3]. At night there were great illuminations. I expected to have catched a great cold; for, the mob at eleven o'clock at night knocking at my door with their commands, I rung my bell in great haste for candles, for fear of having my windows broken, as they were two years ago, when I had the gout too; and the servants running in to draw up the curtains, and leaving all the doors open, turned my room from a hot-house to an ice-house: however, I got no damage.

Sunday, 6th.

We are threatened with illuminations again to-morrow night, as they talk of Mr. Fox being carried in procession to the House of Commons in the morning. I wish some mischief do not happen; our new generation are rather bacchanalian, and not averse to being riotous under the *Princeps Juventutis* [4]. However, what is foreseen, seldom happens. I believe that, of Argus's hundred eyes, those saw best that looked backward—and wise prophets took the hint. We know pretty well now that dreams, which used to pass for predictions, are imperfect recollections.

Being no soothsayer, I will anticipate nothing about Ireland, which is to be the next great question. However it has happened, we have for some years resembled gamesters of fortune, who play to know whether *their own* shall remain theirs.

[3] The Court had instituted the scrutiny in favour of Sir Cecil Wray, the third candidate, to exclude Mr. Charles Fox, whom the King detested for being attached to the Prince of Wales. *Walpole.*

[4] The Prince. *Walpole.*

Tuesday, 8th.

There were illuminations again last night, but I hear of no riot or mischief, except of some fractures of glass in my square: a few panes were broken at my next door, in the windows of her Dowager Grace of Beaufort [5], who would not put out lights; and many in those of Lady Mary Coke, who never misses an opportunity of being an Amazon, or a martyr, or a tragedy queen. She puts me in mind of the Duchess of Albemarle [6], who was mad with pride. The first Duke of Montagu married her as Emperor of China; and to her death she was served on the knee, taking her maids for Ladies of the Bedchamber.

We have still such parching easterly winds that I dare not venture abroad, but I shall take the air the moment the sun lands.

9th.

This letter was written, and was going to the Secretary's office, when your nephew came in, just arrived in town; and, as he sets out on Saturday on his visit to you, I detained my dispatch, as I can write more freely by him than I would by French, German, or Tuscan post offices.

We are certainly in a very embarrassing situation with Ireland. Our raw boy of a minister [7] has most rashly and

[5] Miss Berkeley, sister of the late Lord Bottetort, and widow of Lord Noel Somerset, Duke of Beaufort. She and Lady Mary Coke were violent partisans of the Court. *Walpole.*

[6] Widow of Christopher, second Duke of Albemarle. As she was a coheiress of the last Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, she enjoyed an immense fortune; and, being mad, was confined at Montagu House, but served with royal state. Her relations pretended she was dead, and the Duke was forced to produce her in Westminster Hall. After his death, she lived at Clerkenwell, and 3,000*l.* a year was allowed for her imaginary court. The rest was laid up, and went to her own relations. The story of her second marriage was introduced into the last act of Cibber's comedy of *Sir Courtly Nice* *. Lady Mary Coke endeavoured to persuade people that she had been married to Edward Duke of York, the King's brother; and after his death signed her letters and notes *Maryc*, with an almost invisible c in the tail of the *y*. *Walpole.*

[7] Mr. Pitt. *Walpole.*

* Not by Cibber, but by Crowne.

unadvisedly plunged himself into a great difficulty, and promised to that country much more than was necessary[8]. The dissatisfaction, however, is not near so great here as might have been expected; yet, as it will certainly meet with many other discontents, which Mr. Pitt's ignorance and inexperience, not at all cooled by his vanity and insolence, have sown, his situation grows but tottering. The rapidly chosen Parliament seems by no means firm; and the outrageous injustice of the scrutiny at Westminster, which was solely set on and maintained by royal vengeance, has fallen on the ministers, who wished to be rid of it, but not to be beaten by 38[9]. However, I fancy the author[10] is still more mortified than they are: Fox has triumphed over him as Wilkes did.

Monday last did not pass so quietly as I had heard at first: the new Marquis of Buckingham, who had been profuse of lights last Friday, thought he had done enough, and would not exhibit one on Monday. The mob demolished his windows. Two young rioters of rank, who *said* they were only innocent spectators, were beaten and taken prisoners by the Marquis's domestics, and carried before him. He assuming great dignity, the two young gentlemen let loose a torrent of very coarse appellations. Next morning he recollected himself, and made submissions in proportion to the abuse he had *received*, not *given*. This is the story on one side. On the other, it is affirmed that only one young gentleman was carried into the house, and, being taken for one of the mob, was threatened with a constable by the Marquis, who, on discovering his error, made proper excuses. In short, in such a season of party violence, one cannot learn the truth of what happens in next street: future historians,

[8] The famous propositions for equal trade with Ireland. *Walpole.*
[9] The number of the majority for closing the scrutiny. *Walpole.*
[10] The King. *Walpole.*

however, will know it exactly, and, what is more, people will believe them!

We have a mass of matters besides on the carpet; as, India in several branches, the reform of Parliament, the late taxes, and more to be laid. Pitt has certainly amazing Parliamentary abilities; he has not yet given any indication of others; and, if he gains experience, it is likely to be at his own cost. His measures hitherto have been precipitate and indigested.

The latest colour of affairs on the Continent is crimson. Maestricht is said to be invested by the Emperor[11]. As this letter will not pass under your Great Duke's eye[12], to whom it would not be well-bred to say so, I may tell you that I abhor his brother, whose rapine and reformations are conducted with equal injustice and cruelty; and, when they are so, I suspect the former to be the motive of the latter. I am only comforted by hoping he vexes the King of Prussia. If those two men and the Czarina could plague one another without consequences to thousands, one should delight in their broils.

I hope, for yours, his, and my sake, that your nephew will find you quite recovered: his impatience to see you is most amiable; but you deserve it. Adieu!

2525. To Miss Hannah More.

Berkeley Square, April 5, 1785.

Had I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter[1] the other night, Madam, I should certainly not have

[11] This does not appear to have been the case.

[12] The Great Duke opened all letters before they were delivered. *Walpole.*

Letter 2525.—[1] Mrs. Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), poet and translator of Epictetus. She had been a friend of Johnson, and a contributor to *The Rambler*. In her remarks on the 'blue-stocking set,' of which Mrs. Carter was a well-known member, Lady Louisa Stuart writes of her as one 'upon whom the sound

discovered the authoress of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon[2]. How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents; nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your *Bas Bleu* is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your *Bas Bleu*, in which good nature and good humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the ease of familiarity. I did wish you to write another *Percy*, but I beg now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the meantime, I beseech you not only to print your *specimen of the language that is to be in fashion*, but have it entered at Stationers' Hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the *galimatias* will give the *ton* to the court, as Euphues did near two hundred years ago; and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it: and surely it is not *your* interest, Madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter everywhere to those that are worthy of seeing it; that is, indeed, in very few places; for you *shall* have the

scholarship of a learned man sate, as it does upon a man, easily and quietly, and who was no more vain of being a profound Grecian than an ordinary woman of knowing how to spell.'

[2] Hannah More sent to Horace Walpole an anonymous letter, written to ridicule the adoption of French idioms into the English language by the fashionable people of the day. (*Works* of Lord Orford, vol. v. p. 582.)

honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to everybody that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its authors: but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and therefore I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to you (for I am out of the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, 'Tell truth and shame the devil,' I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman, who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart, especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most seriously obliged to you, Madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication, and am, with sincere regard,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2526. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, April 8, 1785.

YOUR letter of March 15th, written by your own hand, came most welcome to me yesterday; for your nephew, who, I trust, is now with you, received one written by your servant just before he set out for Florence. As it mentioned a return of your bleeding, it alarmed me, for *that* is no gouty symptom; but, as you again write, I flatter myself the discharge will be a remedy instead of a disorder. *My* gout is gone, but has left a vicegerent more persecuting than

itself; I mean, the rheumatism. In short, you must not talk of age to me, who am so much broken as if I was an hundred. General Oglethorpe, who sometimes visits me, and who is ninety-five, has the activity of youth when compared with me. His eyes, ears, articulation, limbs, and memory would suit a boy, if a boy could recollect a century backwards. His teeth are gone; he is a shadow, and a wrinkled one; but his spirits and his spirit are in full bloom: two years and a half ago he challenged a neighbouring gentleman for trespassing on his manor. *I* could carry a cannon as easily as let off a pistol. There is indeed a circumstance that makes me think myself an antediluvian: I have literally seen *seven* descents in one family. I do not believe Oglethorpe can boast of recollecting a longer genealogy. In short, I was schoolfellow of the two last Earls of Waldegrave, and used to go to play with them in the holidays when I was about twelve years old. They lived with their grandmother, natural daughter of James II. One evening while I was there, came in her mother, Mrs. Godfrey[1], that King's mistress—ancient, in truth, and so superannuated that she scarce seemed to know where she was. I saw her another time in her chair in St. James's Park, and have a perfect idea of her face, which was pale, round, and sleek. Begin with her; then count her daughter, Lady Waldegrave; then the latter's son, the Ambassador; his daughter, Lady Harriot Beard[2]; her daughter, the present Dowager Countess of Powis; and her daughter,

LETTER 2526.—[1] Mrs. Godfrey was sister of John, Duke of Marlborough, and by King James was mother of the Duke of Berwick and the first Lady Waldegrave; she afterwards married Colonel Godfrey, by whom she had Lady Falmouth and Mrs. Dunch. See an account of Mrs. Godfrey in the *Mémoires de Grammont*. *Walpole.*

[2] Henrietta, only daughter of James, first Earl of Waldegrave, was married to Lord Edward Herbert, brother of the last Marquis of Powis, by whom she had an only daughter, Barbara, first Countess of Powis. *Walpole.*

Lady Clive[3]—there are six: and the last now lies in of a son, and might have done so six or seven years ago, had she married at fourteen. When one has beheld such a pedigree, one *may* say, 'And yet I am *but* sixty-seven!' I don't know whether it is not another patriarchal characteristic to tell you, that my great-niece, Mrs. Fitzroy[4], is brought to bed of the fifty-sixth of my nephews and nieces, and the present Lady Waldegrave is in a fair way of adding another to the catalogue.

I am not surprised that Mozzi finds there is some difference between being the gallant, when young, of an old woman—and the husband, when elderly, of a girl: methinks he might have concluded so without making the experiment. Mr. Duane has, I believe, left his collection to his nephew, and money enough to preserve it[5]; and the man is a lawyer too, *so* not likely to be ruined: therefore, Mozzi's present, which is handsome, will be welcome.

Your Lord Cowper and his Knighthood of St. Hubert is piddling lunacy. I find that our madmen, though they do not come to their senses abroad, degenerate by transplantation. Garters and orders are simple things in themselves, but succedaneums to them are quite contemptible. An English Earl stooping to be a Knight of St. Hubert is as if a tiger should be proud of being admitted into some order among cats! I think he had better have bought one of the Pope's hats; and then, at least, he would have been *papable*. I literally remember a mad foreigner at Paris (I forget of what country), who had a rage of universal knighthood, and used to appear at the theatres with a different coloured

[3] Lady Henrietta Antonia Herbert (d. 1830), only surviving daughter of first Earl of Powis; m. (1784) Edward Clive, second Baron Clive (who was created Earl of Powis in 1804).

[4] Laura Keppel. *Walpole.*

[5] Most of it, however, consisting of pictures, drawings by Hussey, and antiques, were sold by auction. His gold antique medals Mr. Duane had sold himself to Dr. Hunter. *Walpole.*

ribbon every night. The government forbad his being a Knight of the St. Esprit, but left all the other stripes in Europe's rainbow to his option. I have seen him Companion of the Garter, Bath, and Thistle by turns.

I have no news to send to you or your nephew. The House of Commons could not adjourn for Easter, as for ten days they could not get a House to choose a committee on the Buckinghamshire petition; so, the Speaker and two clerks were forced to go and sit every day in empty walls: your nephew must explain this paragraph to you, as it would be too long for a letter. A committee is chosen at last, but nothing is advanced. The motion of reform of Parliament is deferred till next week. The Irish business hangs off too; and the House sits now till midnight, hearing counsel from Manchester against some of the late taxes. The east wind lasts too, so that in every respect it looks like the beginning of winter; and one so long neither Oglethorpe nor I remember. The sight of your nephew, I hope, has revived you; it is more than I can say that my fifty-six have effected for me.

2527. To Sir Horace Mann.

May 7, 1785.

As I have received a letter from yourself since your nephew set out, and none from him, I flatter myself that he found you well. I have had nothing to tell you worth writing; and, though I begin a letter from my usual regularity, I know not how it will get on, nor whether I shall be able to dispatch it without more ballast. I know nothing but what all Europe knows, that there is a general drought and no grass. Of conversation, the chief topic is air-balloons. A French girl, daughter of a dancer, has made a voyage into the clouds, and nobody has yet broken a neck;

so, neither good nor harm has hitherto been produced by these aerial enterprises. Neither politics nor fashion have furnished any novelties; so that, if I continue my monthly tribute, you must be content with its being of no more value than a peppercorn.

I am inclined to wish that Mrs. Damer would make you another visit. She is very delicate, and often out of order; and certainly was better for her Italian journey. She is engaged on an extraordinary work. There is just built a new bridge of stone over the Thames at Henley, which is close to Park Place[1]. Mrs. Damer offered to make two gigantic masks of the Thame and Isis, for the key-stones, and actually modelled them: *and a statuary was to execute them.* I said, 'Oh, it will be imagined that you had little hand in them: you must perform them yourself.' She consented. The Thame is an old marine god, is finished, and put up; and, they say, has prodigious effect. She is now at work on the Isis; a most beautiful nymph's face, simple as the antique, but quite a new beauty. The idea was taken from Mrs. Freeman, of Fawley Court, a neighbour of General Conway. The key-stones of a county bridge carved by a young lady is an unparalleled curiosity! The originals in terra-cotta are now exhibiting at the Royal Academy; with a model of the same material of two kittens, by her too. She has a singular talent for catching the characters of animals. I have two dogs sleeping, by her (which she has since executed in marble for her brother[2], the Duke of Richmond), that are perfection. We have besides a young statuary, one Proctor[3], who is marvellous.

LETTER 2527.—[1] The seat of General Conway, Mrs. Damer's father. *Walpole.*

[2] Charles, third Duke of Richmond, married Lady Mary Bruce, daughter of Lady Ailesbury, and half-sister to Mrs. Damer. *Walpole.*

[3] Thomas Proctor (1753–1794), painter and sculptor. He made little profit by his works, and died from the effects of want and misery.

He has gained the prizes in drawing, painting, and sculpture; and now exhibits a model in terra-cotta of Ixion, less than life, which is a prodigy of anatomy, with all the freedom of nature. Miss Boyle[4], a grand-daughter of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and a Miss Ogle[5], scholar of Mrs. Damer, model admirably too, and the first paints in oil. My brother, Sir Edward, said, that we have so many miracles in painting and music, that they cease to be any miracles at all. I confess, in the former I see few that attain the degree of doctor; of the others I am no judge.

There has been an enormous fire in Southwark, which has destroyed some acres of buildings and some vessels. It happened amongst magazines of turpentine, pitch, tar, and hemp; and has besides consumed to the value of an hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling of tea, which the East India Company had just purchased at Ostend to anticipate the smugglers. One must be mighty prone to compassion before one can feel for the Company, and must quite forget their atrocious deeds in India. My bowels shall be sent thither (as those of our ancestors used to be to the Holy Land) sooner than to Leadenhall Street.

Friday, 13th.

As I heard that the great question of Ireland was to be decided yesterday, and it being of no consequence when my letter set out, I detained it till it could have more dignity. I can barely now tell you the sum total, none of the particulars; for I have seen no member of the House of Commons. The business is not finished, for the House was only in a committee: yet you may look upon it as determined; for Mr. Pitt had so great a majority to favour

[4] Charlotte, second daughter of Sir Ch. H. Williams, married Captain Walsingham Boyle, brother of the Earl of Shannon. *Walpole.*

[5] Probably a daughter of Dr. Newton Ogle, Dean of Winchester; another of whose daughters was the second wife of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

his propositions, that there is no doubt but they will pass triumphantly. The committee sat *till past eight this morning*; the numbers were, 281 for the court, 155 for the opposition. The completion of that affair, and of the taxes, which were proposed last Monday, will probably conclude the session; and, earthly business being adjusted, all the world will be at leisure to travel the air—not that terrestrial matters have interrupted balloons. Mr. Windham[6], the member for Norwich, who was with you not long ago, has made a voyage into the clouds, and was in danger of falling to *earth*, and being *shipwrecked*.

Yesterday sevennight, as I was coming downstairs at Strawberry, to my chaise, my housekeeper told me that if I would go into the garden I might see a balloon; so I did, and so high, that though the sun shone, I could scarce discern it, and not bigger than my snuff-box. It had set out privately from Moulsey, in my neighbourhood, and went higher than any *airgonaut* had yet reached. But Mr. Windham, and Sadler[7] his pilot, were near meeting the fate of Icarus; and though they did land safely, their bladder-vessel flew away again, and may be drowned in the moon for what we know! Three more balloons sail today; in short, we shall have a prodigious navy in the air, and then what signifies having lost the empire of the ocean?

2528. To George Hardinge.

Strawberry Hill, May 24, 1785.

Mr. Walpole cannot help troubling Mr. Hardinge with a line on a distress he has had this morning. A company came to see his house, and said they came from Hampstead,

[6] Of Felbrigge. *Walpole.*

[7] James Sadler, whose first ascent was made on this occasion.

Letter 2528.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Illustrations of Literature*, vol. iii. p. 219.

and that Mr. Hardinge had spoken to him about them; which not having happened, Mr. Walpole did not know what to do. However, as they used Mr. Hardinge's name, Mr. Walpole (*as another set was expected*) offered them to come to-morrow, or to walk over the house now till the other company should come; but they did not choose either. Mr. Hardinge knows Mr. Walpole is always desirous of obliging him; but he is so teased with numerous applications, that he is forced to be as strict as possible; and was last year obliged to print his *Rules*, one of which he takes the liberty of sending to Mr. Hardinge, which may save him trouble too, as it will be an answer to those who may apply to him when he is not at leisure to write. Nor can Mr. Walpole admit any accidental company, when a day is engaged; nor can the housekeeper show the house but by a written ticket.

2529. To Sir Horace Mann.

May 29, 1785.

Pleased as I was by hearing from your nephew, I am much more delighted, my dear Sir, to see *your* hand again. Yet I must chide you for writing so much, though at intervals, when you are weak and in bed. Your nephew told me your cough was troublesome; but I hope the warm weather will quite remove it. Never was so trying a winter: everybody has suffered but the physicians and apothecaries. We are still wanting rain, and are treated like Egyptians by insects.

You have acted like yourself, and the younger Sir Horace has acted like the elder, about Miss Lucy's[1] marriage. I do

Letter 2529.—[1] James Mann, only son of Edward Louisa Mann, elder brother of Sir Horace, sen., was going to be married to Lucy, eldest daughter of Sir Horace, jun. *Walpole.*

not know the *sposo*, but am contented with your account of him, and approve of his *name*. It is quite right not to oppose the inclinations of the young when there are no very striking or disgraceful objections. As to great estates and titles, what securities are they? Half our nobility are undone, and every day going into exile, from their own extravagance.

I saw with concern in the newspapers, two days ago, that their Neapolitan Majesties were visiting your Florentine Arch-Graces, and I dreaded their harassing you and putting you to expense: but your indisposition must give you a dispensation, and is even lightened to me by its saving you fatigue. I have no objection to their playing at Naumachias. It were well if sovereigns would be content with mock fights, and not sport with the lives of their subjects. The battle of the bridge at Pisa[2] is more glorious than invading the Scheldt. Two days ago there was a report of the *Dauphin's* death, and was said to come from Lord Sydney, Secretary of State. He was asked, if true? He replied, 'I said, Lord *Godolphin*.' So he is, and has given four thousand pounds a year to Lord Francis Osborne, second son of the other Secretary of State, Lord Carmarthen[3], who himself inherits three thousand a year more.

I am barren of other news. The House of Commons sits, on taxes and the Irish propositions, but is thinly attended. I shall settle at Strawberry in about a week; but cannot have less to tell you than I have at present. Your nephew,

[2] An annual festival so called. Mann writes as follows of the incident referred to by Walpole:—'The Pisans are attached to it with an enthusiasm that cannot be described; and it is performed with all the pomp of a regular battle. Two of the young Arch-Dukes have taken opposite parts in it; and, in their disputes, one of them, who is a Hussar, drew his hanger, and wounded his brother in the face; for which they were both put under arrest for some days.' (*Mann and Manners*, vol. ii. p. 415.)

[3] Francis, only son of the Duke of Leeds, by Lady Mary Godolphin. *Walpole.*

I hope, will stay with you till you are quite recovered. What a nephew! I cannot boast of such an one in my extensive nepotism; and yet I have a few very good. An adopted one, Lord Waldegrave[4], is excellent. Most of my nieces are unexceptionable. That is a great deal to say in an age not rigorous, and of ample licence. I wonder our women are not much worse; for our newspapers are so indiscriminately scurrilous, to the great joy of devout old women, that pretty young women might be hardened, and trust to not being worse treated than many who are blameless. I have no patience with hags who have no temptations, and think that frequent church-going authorizes them to spread scandal from Sunday noon to next Sunday morning. There is not so noxious an animal as an ugly old harridan, who thinks herself religious the moment she becomes a disagreeable object; though she chooses to forget that Charity is preferable to Faith and Hope, or interprets Charity to mean nothing but giving alms. They have more occasion to carry a pocket-glass than a handsome woman—to put them in mind of their own death's heads.

I said, at the beginning of my letter, that I rejoiced to see your handwriting; yet I beg you not to give me that treat often. A line from your nephew, if it tells me you mend, will content me. I have frequently written to you by proxy; and, in truth, my letters require nor deserve answers. I have so much abandoned a world that is too juvenile for me, and have so few connections with it left, that my correspondence can have neither novelty nor spirit in it; and therefore, except to you, I scarce write a letter of ten lines in a month, and seldom but on business, of which too I have very little. A few antiquaries and virtuosos now and then consult me, because my oracle, from its ancientry,

[4] George, fourth Earl of Waldegrave, married to his cousin, Lady Laura Waldegrave, daughter of the Duchess of Gloucester. *Walpole.*

is become respected; but my devotees ask me simple questions, and in my responses I generally plead ignorance, and often with truth. My reading or writing has seldom had any object but my own amusement; and, having given over the trade, I had rather my customers went to another shop. The profession of author is trifling; but, when any *charlatanerie* is superadded, it is a contemptible one. To puff oneself is to be a mountebank, and swallowing wind as well as vending it.

I do not answer your nephew's letter in form; for formal it would be when you see I have so little to say, except to thank him for it, and for his most amiable tenderness and care of you. Nay, writing to one is writing to both: one loves two Sir Horaces as one: your hearts are as much the same as your names, and to write to you separately would be making a distinction in your unity. I am glad the cousins are to be one too. Adieu! I long to hear that you do not lie in bed but at night.

2530. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, June 7, 1785.

Though you had declared yourself on the wing, Madam, you took your flight before I was aware, or I should have attempted to make you a parting bow. People who *have* paid their bills are not apt to fly from town so rapidly. You have time to cool, indeed, perhaps not to dry yourselves, for June, that is not often in debt for rain, seems likely to discharge all his arrears. I question, however, whether a deluge will replace the leaves before the midsummer shoots: the tops of all my elms are as naked as in the first days of November; chafers and nabobs, I mean caterpillars, have stripped them stark.

Mr. B. wrote, I conclude, when he was mad or drunk,

probably the latter, for he seems to have had sober intervals enough to flatter every man who is or may be a minister; his advertisement is of a piece with Miss Bellamy's [1].

The poor milkwoman's [2] poetry is published, and the charity, I imagine, equal whether by subscribing or buying the book. She seems to have a conscious dignity of mind, which I like better than her verses, and which is a greater rarity than middling poets or even than middling poetesses; I am a little sick of the Hayleys and Miss Sewards, who are like common milkwomen who borrow tankards and flowers of all their acquaintance for Mayday.

You tell me, Madam, that you only wrote to receive a letter; you do receive only your own letter back again, paragraph by paragraph. In truth I am superannuated, and know nothing, do nothing, am fit for nothing. I have been three days alone at Strawberry, and nowhere else but to dine at Gunnersbury last Friday, with the Conways, Harcourts, Mount-Edgcumbes, and Mrs. Howe. I expected that Lady Harcourt would every now and then say *your Majesty* instead of *your Royal Highness*. My Lord, too, is quite Count Castiglione [3], the perfect courtier. General Conway, who never remembers what anybody is or was, asked him, on speaking of Handel's music at Westminster Abbey, whether his Lordship had been in waiting! concluding he was a Lord of the Bedchamber.

This is all my journal contains, Madam; but what better can you expect from a Strulbrug? and one so insipid as to be content with being so? Nay, it is not an unpleasant state. Having outlived all one's passions and pursuits, and not having acquired avarice in lieu, one sits down tranquilly like an old sailor that has been in many storms, and sees

LETTER 2530. — [1] George Ann Bellamy (d. 1788), the actress, who had just published her *Apology* for her life.

[2] Mrs. Yearsley.

[3] Count Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), author of *Il Libro del Corteggiano*.

the crowd bustling and jostling, or playing the fool, and feels the comfort of idleness and indifference, and the holiday luxury of having nothing to do. Don't you think the retired tradesman, whose journal is in the *Spectator*[4], was a happy being? He played with his cat, and strolled to Mother Redcap's, if the weather was fair, and had no uneasiness, but when his friend the politician[5] (I forget his name) prognosticated war. There I am happier: I am past and below political apprehensions, and have so little time left, that the events of all futurity might as well disturb my imagination, as, perhaps, the next that are to happen. Even returns of pain, of which I have suffered so much, have little terror for me: I cannot feel a quarter of what I have felt, I mean in point of duration; and should they be violent, I have not strength to struggle with them. But I beg your pardon, Madam, though I can but smile with thinking how you will be disappointed on receiving, instead of a letter, the reflections of a Strulbrug on his own inanity. When Swift drew the character, he did not know it. Poor man! the turbulence of his own temper, and the apprehensions of his own decay, made him conceive it as a miserable condition: on the contrary, it is almost a gay one, when one can be sensible of it, and of all its enjoyments. I would tell you more of it, Madam, if it were capable of any variety; but as its uniformity is one of its felicities, you people of the world who have no taste for sameness, would not be diverted with the particulars. To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow—all alike. Tonton is as principal an actor as the tradesman's cat; but he has more vivacity, though he is not mad, as your Ladyship apprehended, when he bit Lord Ossory's finger; indeed, he can bite but little more than your obedient servant, his master.

[4] See no. 317. [5] Mr. Nisby.

2531. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 20, 1785.

I give your Ladyship a thousand thanks for the crown of laurel you sent me: I tried it on immediately; but it certainly was never made for me; it was a vast deal too big, and did not fit me at all; it must have been designed for one of double my size. Besides, as I never wear so much as a hat, it would make my head ache—and then, too, as nobody in the village has worn a sprig of laurel since Mr. Pope's death, good Lord! how my neighbours would stare, if I should appear with a chaplet, to which I have no more title than Lord de Ferrers[1] to the earldom of Leicester. I will not be such a bear as to send back your Ladyship's favour: but if you would give me leave to present it to poor Mr. Hayley, or Mr. Cumberland, who ruin themselves in new laurels every day, it would make them as happy as princes; and I dare answer that either of them would write an ode upon you, not quite so good perhaps, yet within a hundred thousand degrees as excellent as Major Scott's[2], and at least better than Mr. Warton's. However, though I am no poet, yet I don't know what I may come to, if I live. I have just written the life of a young lady in verse; in which, perhaps, I have too much affected brevity, though had I chosen to spin it out by a number of proper names, more falsehoods, and a tolerable quantity of anachronisms, there was matter enough to have furnished as many volumes as Miss Bellamy's *Memoirs*. Mine I have comprised in these four lines:—

Letter 2531.—[1] Eldest son of first Marquis Townshend. He was created Earl of Leicester in May 1784.

[2] Major John Scott (afterwards Scott-Waring), M.P. for West Looe and political agent in England for Warren Hastings.

Patty was a pretty maid;
Patty was of men afraid;
Patty grew her fears to lose,
And grew so brave, she lost her nose.

As the world is now so overstocked with anecdotes, I don't know whether it will not be advisable for future English biographers to aim at my conciseness, and confine themselves to quatrains. Dr. Johnson's history, though he is going to have as many lives as a cat, might be reduced to four lines; but I shall wait, to extract the quintessence, till Sir John Hawkins, Madame Piozzi[3], and Mr. Boswell have produced their quartos. Apropos, Madam, t'other night I was sitting with Mrs. Vesey; there was very little light; arrived Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a person whom I took for Mr. Boswell. I sewed up my mouth, and, though he addressed me two or three times, I answered nothing but yes or no. Just as he was going away, I found out that it was Mr. Richard Burke[4], and endeavoured to repair my causticity. I am not quite in charity with Sir Joshua; he desired to come and see my marvellous Henry VII; when he saw it, he said, 'It is in the old hard Flemish manner.' For hard, it is so bold, that it is one of the great reasons for doubting its antiquity; and for Flemish, there is nothing Flemish in it, except a *chiaroscuro*, as masterly as Rubens's; but it is not surprising that Sir Joshua should dislike colouring that has lasted so long!

I went last week to see a new piece, by O'Keeffe, my favourite author, next to Major Scott. Harry Fox was in the box. I asked him if he had ever seen *The Agreeable*

[3] *Née* Hester Lynch Salusbury; b. 1741; m. 1. (1763) Henry Thrale, a rich brewer; 2. (1784) Gabriel Piozzi, an Italian musician. She is chiefly known from her friendship with Dr. Johnson, which, however, came to an end after her second marriage. She published *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson* in 1786, and *Letters to and from Dr. Johnson* in 1788. She died in 1821.

[4] Brother or son of the statesman.



Mrs Piozzi

From a drawing by George Dance R.A.

Surprise; he said, No; I cried it up to the heavens. He was much surprised at *The Beggar on Horseback*, and asked me if *The Beggar on Horseback* was like *The Agreeable Surprise*. The new piece is very low, to be sure, and yet it diverted me; but you know I like extremes, and next to perfect wit, perfect nonsense, when it is original. A sort of folly I do not admire is air-balloons; but I believe their reign is over. They say Monsieur Pilatrier[5] and another man have been burnt to cinders, and Mr. Sadler has not been heard of yet.

The old, mad, drunken Duke of Norfolk is going to be married again to a Miss Eld[6], who is forty years old and a Protestant.

Tuesday.

I could not finish my letter yesterday, for Lord Sandwich, who was to breakfast with me, arrived sooner than I expected. He brought Mr. Noble with him, the author of the *History of the Cromwells*, and Mr. Selwyn came to dinner with us, and the latter stayed all night. Lord Sandwich has taken the patronage of Mr. Noble (as Hinchinbrook was the residence of Oliver), and the second edition will be much more accurate and curious than the first. I could but look with admiration at the Earl, who at our age can enter so warmly into any pursuits and find them amusing! It is pleasant to have such spirits, that, after going through such busy political scenes, he can be diverted with carrying a white wand at Handel's jubilee[7], and for two years together! Do you think Lord Lansdowne would be content with being master of the ceremonies at Bath? The papers

[5] Jean François Pilâtre de Rozier (1756–1785), a well-known French aeronaut. On June 15, 1785, he ascended from Boulogne in a defective balloon, which burst almost at once. Pilâtre and his companion fell to the ground from a considerable height, and were killed on the spot.

[6] This marriage did not take place.

[7] The Handel Commemoration, held in Westminster Abbey on June 3 and 6, 1785.

tell a different story from mine of poor Pilatrier's exit. I hope it will prevent Mr. Fitzpatrick from such an expedition. It would be silly to break one's neck in going no whither; don't you think so, Madam?

2532. To John Pinkerton.

June 22, 1785.

Since I received your book[1], Sir, I scarce ceased from reading till I had finished it; so admirable I found it, and so full of good sense, brightly delivered. Nay, I am pleased with myself, too, for having formed the same opinions with you on several points, in which we do not agree with the generality of men. On some topics, I confess frankly, I do not concur with you: considering how many you have touched, it would be wonderful if we agreed on all, or I should not be sincere if I said I did. There are others on which I have formed no opinion; for I should give myself an impertinent air, with no truth, if I pretended to have any knowledge of many subjects, of which, young as you are, you seem to have made yourself master. Indeed, I have gone deeply into nothing, and therefore shall not discuss those heads on which we differ most; as probably I should not defend my own opinions well. There is but one part of your work to which I will venture any objection, though you have considered it much, and I little, very little indeed, with regard to your proposal, which to me is but two days old: I mean your plan for the improvement of our language, which I allow has some defects, and which wants correction in several particulars. The specific amendment which you propose, and to which I object, is the addition of *a*'s and *o*'s to our terminations. To change *s* for *a* in the plural number

Letter 2532.—[1] *Letters on Literature*, published by Pinkerton under the name of Robert Heron.

of our substantives and adjectives, would be so violent an alteration, that I believe neither the power of power nor the power of genius would be able to effect it. In most cases I am convinced that very strong innovations are more likely to make impression than small and almost imperceptible differences, as in religion, medicine, politics, &c.; but I do not think that language can be treated in the same manner, especially in a refined age. When a nation first emerges from barbarism, two or three masterly writers may operate wonders; and the fewer the number of writers, as the number is small at such a period, the more absolute is their authority. But when a country has been polishing itself for two or three centuries, and when, consequently, authors are innumerable, the most supereminent genius (or whoever is esteemed so, though without foundation) possesses very limited empire, and is far from meeting implicit obedience. Every petty writer will contest very novel institutions: every inch of change in any language will be disputed; and the language will remain as it was, longer than the tribunal which should dictate very heterogeneous alterations. With regard to adding *a* or *o* to final consonants, consider, Sir, should the usage be adopted, what havoc it would make! All our poetry would be defective in metre, or would become at once as obsolete as Chaucer; and could we promise ourselves that, though we should acquire better harmony and more rhymes, we should have a new crop of poets, to replace Milton, Dryden, Gray, and, I am sorry you will not allow me to add, Pope! You might enjoin our prose to be reformed, as you have done by the *Spectator* in your Letter XXXIV; but try Dryden's *Ode* by your new institution.

I beg your pardon for these trivial observations: I assure you I could write a letter ten times as long, if I were to specify all I like in your work. I more than like most of

it: and I am charmed with your glorious love of liberty, and your other humane and noble sentiments. Your book I shall with great pleasure send to Mr. Colman: may I tell him, without naming you, that it is written by the author of the comedy I offered to him? He must be struck with your very handsome and generous conduct in printing your encomiums on him, after his rejecting your piece. It is as great as uncommon, and gives me as good an opinion of your heart, Sir, as your book does of your great sense. Both assure me that you will not take ill the liberty I have used in expressing my doubts on your plan for amending our language, or for any I may use in dissenting from a few other sentiments in your work—as I shall in what I think your too low opinion of some of the French writers, of your preferring Lady Mary Wortley to Madame de Sévigné, and of your esteeming Mr. Hume a man of deeper and more solid understanding than Mr. Gray. In the two last articles it is impossible to think more differently than we do. In Lady Mary's *Letters*, which I never could read but once, I discovered no merit of any sort; yet I have seen others by her (unpublished) that have a good deal of wit; and for Mr. Hume, give me leave to say that I think your opinion, *that he might have ruled a state*, ought to be qualified a little; as in the very next page you say, his *History* is *a mere apology for prerogative*, and a very weak one. If he could have ruled a state, one must presume, at best, that he would have been an able tyrant; and yet I should suspect that a man who, sitting coolly in his chamber, could forge but a weak apology for the prerogative, would not have exercised it very wisely. I knew personally and well both Mr. Hume and Mr. Gray, and thought there was no degree of comparison between their understandings; and, in fact, Mr. Hume's writings were so superior to his conversation, that I frequently said he understood nothing till he had written upon it. What

you say, Sir, of the discord in his *History* from his love of prerogative and hatred of churchmen, flatters me much; as I have taken notice of that very unnatural discord in a piece I printed some years ago, but did not publish, and which I will show to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you here; a satisfaction I shall be glad to taste, whenever you will let me know you are at leisure after the beginning of next week. I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

2533. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, June 24, 1785.

Though I beg not to urge you to repeat those proofs too often, I must feel great satisfaction from every letter I receive from you under your own hand, when I know your health is not yet quite re-established. I should be content, rationally content, that is enjoining myself to be content, with hearing of you from your nephew; but your own characters must be more comfortable. However, the more you mend, write the less: I am no longer in fear about you, and consequently my patience will allow of longer intervals now I know you are recovering, which *we* cannot do with the impetuosity of youth. But then Italian summers are a good succedaneum, and, I hope, will be more efficacious than our north-easterly winds. Even with these, *I* am arrived at being as well as I was before my last fit, and I beg you will pledge me.

Thank you for your *Gazette*, and account of *spectacles*[1]. Florence is a charming theatre for such festivals: those Italy is giving to the Neapolitan Majesties put one in mind of the times when the Medici, the Farneses, Gonzagas, &c., banqueted each other's Highness reciprocally. I am glad

Letter 2533.—[1] Relations of the entertainments made for the King and Queen of Naples. *Walpole.*

the *holy* Roman Emperor is at leisure to visit *principini*, *palazzi*, and *giardini*, instead of besieging *fortezze*, like a *wicked* overgrown *principone*. I am glad, too, that the *wicked holy* Roman Father[2] is disappointed of his iniquitous plunder. Rome is come to its dregs again when the Pontifex Maximus is sunk into an *heredipeta*—one of the vile vocations that marked the *faeces Romuli*.

Our *Senate* is still sitting, and likely to sit, on the Irish propositions, which gravel both countries. Mr. Grattan, the phenomenon on the other side of the Channel, has set his face against Mr. Pitt's altered plan. This is all I know of the matter. I am very little in town now, and Twickenham is one of the most unpolitical villages in the island.

You will find by our and the French *Gazettes*, that *air-navigation* has received a great blow; the first *airgonaut*, poor Pilatrier, and his companions, having broken their necks. He had the Croix de St. Louis in his pocket, and was to have put it on the moment he should have crossed the Channel and landed in England. I have long thought that France has conceived hopes of annihilating our Pyrenees by these flying squadrons. Here they have been turned into a mere job for getting money from gaping fools. One of our adventurers, named Sadler, has been missing, and is supposed lost in the German Ocean.

Prince William, the King's third son, has been in England, and is sailed for the Mediterranean, I think; so, I suppose, will visit Leghorn. It is pity he will arrive too late for your shows, which would be proper for his age.

On reading over your Florentine *Gazette*, I observed that the Great Duke has a manufacture of porcelain. If any of it is sold, I should be glad if your nephew would bring me

[2] Pope Pius VI had wheedled a rich old abbé to make him heir; but the family contested the will and set it aside. *Walpole.*

a single bit—a cup, or other trifle, as a sample. I remember that, ages ago, there was a manufacture at Florence belonging to Marquis Ginori, of which I wished for a piece, but could not procure one: the Grand Ducal may be more attainable. I have a closet furnished with specimens of porcelain of various countries, besides a good deal of Fayence or Raphael ware, and some pieces with the arms of Medici—but am not I an old simpleton to be wanting playthings still?—and how like is one's last cradle to one's first! Adieu!

28th.

P.S. Notwithstanding Pilatrier's miscarriage, balloonation holds up its head. Colonel Fitzpatrick, Lord Ossory's brother, has ascended in one from Oxford, and was alone[3]. Sadler, whom I thought lost, is come to light again, and was to have been of the voyage; but the vessel not being potent enough for two, the Colonel went alone, had a brush with a high hill in his descent, but landed safe about fifteen miles from the University. How posterity will laugh at us, one way or other! If half a dozen break their necks, and balloonism is exploded, we shall be called fools for having imagined it could be brought to use: if it should be turned to account, we shall be ridiculed for having doubted.

2534. To John Pinkerton.

June 26, 1785.

I have sent your book to Mr. Colman, Sir, and must desire you in return to offer my grateful thanks to

[3] 'June 24. About two o'clock in the afternoon, Col. Fitzpatrick ascended alone in Mr. Sadler's balloon at Oxford; and having satisfied his curiosity, descended near Kingston Lisle, opposite the White Horse Hills in Berkshire, to which place he was followed by Mr. Sadler; and, being conducted to Wantage, he took some refreshment, and immediately set out for London.' (*Gent Mag.* 1785, pt. ii. p. 566.)

Mr. Knight[1], who has done me an honour, to which I do not know how I am entitled, by the present of his poetry, which is very classic, and beautiful, and tender, and of chaste simplicity.

To *your* book, Sir, I am much obliged on many accounts; particularly for having recalled my mind to subjects of delight, to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself whence you feel so much disregard for certain authors whose fame is established: you have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, on the plea of their being imitators: it was natural, then, to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity. I think I have discovered a cause, which I do not remember to have seen noted; and *that* cause I suspect to have been, that certain of those authors possessed grace:—do not take me for a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient of writing, but I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style, which regards expression. *Grace*, I think, belongs to *manner*. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors, not in your favour, obtained part of their renown; Virgil, in particular: and yet I am far from disagreeing with you on his subject in general. There is such a dearth of invention in the *Æneid* (and when he did invent, it was often so foolishly), so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have frequently said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, that I believe I should like his poem better, if I was to hear it repeated, and did not understand Latin. On the other hand, he has more than harmony: whatever he utters is said gracefully,

Letter 2534.—[1] Perhaps Richard Payne Knight (1750–1824), the numismatist.

and he ennobles his images, especially in the *Georgics*; or, at least, it is more sensible there, from the humility of the subject. A Roman farmer might not understand his diction in agriculture; but he made a Roman courtier understand farming, the farming of that age, and could captivate a Lord of Augustus's Bedchamber, and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. On the contrary, Statius and Claudian, though talking of war, would make a soldier despise them as bullies. That graceful manner of thinking in Virgil seems to me to be more than style, if I do not refine too much: and I admire, I confess, Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil 'tossed about his dung with an air of majesty.' A style may be excellent without grace: for instance, Dr. Swift's. Eloquence may bestow an immortal style, and one of more dignity; yet eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air that flows from or constitutes grace. Addison himself was master of that grace, even in his pieces of humour, and which do not owe their merit to style; and from that combined secret he excels all men that ever lived, but Shakespeare, in humour, by never dropping into an approach towards burlesque and buffoonery, when even his humour descended to characters that in other hands would have been vulgarly low. Is not it clear that Will Wimble was a gentleman, though he always lived at a distance from good company? Fielding had as much humour, perhaps, as Addison; but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting. His innkeepers and parsons are the grossest of their profession; and his gentlemen are awkward when they should be at their ease.

The Grecians had grace in everything; in poetry, in oratory, in statuary, in architecture, and probably, in music and painting. The Romans, it is true, were their imitators; but, having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit that almost raises them to the rank of

originals. Horace's odes acquired their fame, no doubt, from the graces of his manner and purity of his style—the chief praise of Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than Horace's odes.

Waller, whom you proscribe, Sir, owed his reputation to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled, and even fell flat; but a few of his smaller pieces are as graceful as possible: one might say that he excelled in painting ladies in enamel, but could not succeed in portraits in oil, large as life. Milton had such superior merit, that I will only say, that if his angels, his Satan, and his Adam have as much dignity as the Apollo Belvidere, his Eve has all the delicacy and graces of the Venus of Medicis; as his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. Milton's tenderness imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas: and the *Allegro*, *Penseroso*, and *Comus* might be denominated from the Three Graces; as the Italians gave similar titles to two or three of Petrarch's best sonnets.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace (for his mind was graceful) if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; which, when it does not offer itself naturally, degenerates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is the mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry produces erroneous dignity; the familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other, distort or prevent grace. Nature, that furnishes samples of all qualities, and on the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive and comprehensive than I could make definitions of my meaning; but I will apply the swan only, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me an idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is

pure; his attitudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet may be ugly, his notes hissing, not musical, his walk not natural; he can soar, but it is with difficulty: still, the impression the swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those it dislikes. If Boileau was too austere to admit the pliability of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile: but, if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more: he certainly does not fall below his originals; and, considering at what period he wrote, has greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his *Lutrin*, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Excepting Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, and the other a buffoon. In my eyes, the *Lutrin*, *The Dispensary*, and the *Rape of the Lock*, are standards of grace and elegance not to be paralleled by antiquity; and eternal reproaches to Voltaire, whose indelicacy in the *Pucelle* degraded him as much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his *Henriade* leaves Virgil, and even Lucan, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors.

The *Dunciad* is blemished by the offensive images of the games; but the poetry appears to me admirable; and, though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others: it has descriptions not surpassed by any poet

that ever existed, and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal. The lines on Italy, on Venice, on convents, have all the grace for which I contend as distinct from poetry, though united with the most beautiful; and the *Rape of the Lock*, besides the originality of great part of the invention, is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call grace is denominated elegance; but by grace I mean something higher: I will explain myself by instances—Apollo is graceful, Mercury elegant: Petrarch, perhaps, owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers and the graces of his style. They conceal his poverty of meaning and want of variety. His complaints, too, may have added an interest which, had his passion been successful, and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in poetry, I am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, such as Ovid's and Cicero's in their banishments. We respect melancholy, because it imparts a similar affection, pity. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sévigné shines both in grief and gaiety. There is too much of sorrow for her daughter's absence; yet it is always expressed by new terms, by new images, and often by wit, whose tenderness has a melancholy air. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition, gaiety, every paragraph has novelty: her allusions, her applications are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance, and attaches you even to the spots she inhabited. Her language is correct, though unstudied; and, when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian. Pray read her accounts of

the death of Turenne, and of the arrival of King James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons as if you had lived at the time.

For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression (not that I have written with any method), I hate the cold impartiality recommended to historians: 'Si vis me flere, dolendum est primùm ipsi tibi': but, that I may not wander again, nor tire, nor contradict you any more, I will finish now, and shall be glad if you will dine at Strawberry Hill next Sunday, and take a bed there, when I will tell you how many more parts of your book have pleased me, than have startled my opinions, or, perhaps, prejudices. I have the honour to be, Sir, with regard, &c.

2535. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1785.

Icarus Icariis nomina fecit aquis.

Thanks to the powers of the air that Mr. Fitzpatrick has not new-christened the Thame or the Isis! nor dyed the Saxon White Horse black! Why did he ascend from Oxford? He should have left the Laureate[1] to get another fall from the *White Horse*[2]. Mr. Fitzpatrick had given ample proofs of his spirit before, and, therefore, I hope he will now lie on his arms.

As to me, Madam, if I gathered a chaplet and crowned myself, at least your Ladyship planted the tree of which I plucked a branch. You did not utter the words *crown of laurel*; but you did say I was *reposing under my own laurels*, therefore I may justly plead with our prime ancestor, that *the woman tempted me and I did eat*; yet I did not swallow a leaf—but no more of that.

Letter 2535.—[1] Thomas Warton; his Birthday ode was much ridiculed.
[2] The emblem of Hanover.

I can make as just a defence on my omission of Lord Barrington, of which here is the simple narrative. As he was an obscure Presbyterian writer, I had never heard of him when I published my first edition. Being then told of him, I asked his son, the present Lord, for a list of his works. His Lordship, conscious that his parent, who had been a great rogue, had better be forgotten, desired as a favour, that I would *not* repair the omission, and therefore I did not. His brother, the Bishop of Salisbury[3], who was not so discreet, and who did not like to lose the authorship out of the genealogy, inserted his father's life in the new *Biographia*, and in grateful return for my *noli prosequi*, ascribed the punishment of his own father's knavery to an act of revenge in mine. In short, the late Lord Barrington was expelled the House of Commons for being concerned in a gross bubble called the *Harburgh lottery*; and the bishop pretends (which his father himself never did) that the expulsion was procured by Sir Robert Walpole, because Lord Barrington, who twice sold the Presbyterians to the court, had been attached to Lord Sunderland. Lord Barrington, in the next editions of the *Royal and Noble Authors*, will find his proper place, though he did not in the first edition—nor in the pillory. I beg you will send for a new book, called *Letters on Literature*, by Robert Heron, Esq. It is an extraordinary work, in which there is a variety of knowledge and a great mixture of parts. There are several things to which I do not at all agree; others much to my mind; but which will not be popular. I never heard of *Robert Heron* before, but he does not seem to design to remain in obscurity, nor averse to literary warfare, whence I conclude he is young; and you will see from every page, Madam, that he will not want antagonists.

I have been for two or three days in town, where

[3] Hon. Shute Barrington (1734–1826), translated to Durham, 1791.

I heard two Hessian French horns, who are reckoned supereminent. They are as reasonable as March, the tooth-drawer; they ask *but* ten guineas for an evening. I heard, too, what diverted me more, an impertinence of Mr. Hastings when he was last in England. Lord Huntingdon, by way of acknowledging him, told him he believed they were related—'No, my Lord,' said Hastings, 'I am descended from Hastings, Earl of Pembroke,' meaning that he was of the elder branch. Judge how the blood of Clarence boiled! 'I thought,' said the Earl, 'that there were no descendants of that branch left but the Marchioness of Grey,' and turned on his heel. I wish he had replied, 'I thought *you* were only of the branch of green Hastings.'

I am now settled on my hill, a melancholy widower; Lady Browne has left Twickenham. As she was my newsmonger, I shall know even less than I used to do. All this morning I have been busy in placing Henry VII in the state bedchamber, and making a new arrangement of pictures. It is really a very royal chamber now and much improved. Besides the family of Henry VIII over the chimney as before, and Queen Maintenon over one of the doors, there are Henry VII and Catherine of Braganza on one side of the bed; Henry VIII and Henriette Duchess of Orleans on the other. There will be a much prettier room soon at the other end of the village; Lady Di is painting another with small pictures framed with wreaths of flowers

—— Flowers worthy of paradise[4]!

there is already a wreath of honeysuckles, surpassing her own lilacs, and such as she only could paint and Milton describe; and there is a baby Bacchus so drunk! and so pretty! borne in triumph by bacchanalian Cupids. Twickenham does not vie with the pomps of Stowe, but, like the

[4] *Paradise Lost*, iv. 241.

modest violet, *qui se cachoit sous l'herbe*[5], has its humble sweets.

2536. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, July 4, 1785.

I write again so quickly, Madam, not to detain Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter, for which I give you many thanks, and which you must value as it is so very sensible and unaffected an account of his aerial jaunt, and deserves to be preserved in your Milesian archives; for, whether aerostation becomes a professional art, or is given up with the prosecution of the Tower of Babel and other invasions on the coast of Heaven, an original letter under the hand of the first *air*gonauts will always be a precious curiosity.

I have just been reading a work by a new noble authoress, a princess of the blood of Clarence, and a lady deeply versed in the antiquities of the country where the great Brian Mac Gill Patrick was seated, as well as of the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Gauls, &c. It is the present Countess of Moira[1], whose letter to her son is in the new seventh volume of the *Archæologia*, and gives an account of a skeleton and its habiliments lately discovered in the county of Down and barony of Linalearty.

Oh, but I have better news for you, Madam, if you have any patriotism as a citizen of this world and wish its longevity. Mr. Herschel has found out that our globe is a comely middle-aged personage, and has not so many wrinkles as seven stars, who are evidently our seniors. Nay, he has discovered that the Milky Way is not only

[5] Madame de Sévigné in her letter to Madame de Grignan of Sept. 1, 1680, refers to Madame de la Vallière as 'cette petite *violette qui se cachoit sous l'herbe*, et qui était honteuse d'être maîtresse, d'être mère, d'être duchesse.'

Letter 2536.—[1] Lady Elizabeth Hastings (d. 1808), eldest daughter of ninth Earl of Huntingdon; m. (1752) John Rawdon, first Baron Rawdon, afterwards Earl of Moira.

a mob of stars, but that there is another dairy of them still farther off, whence I conclude comets are nothing but pails returning from milking, instead of balloons filled with inflammable air, which must by this time have made terrible havoc in such thickets of worlds, if at all dangerous; now I shall descend, as if out of a balloon, from the heavens to the milkwoman. It is no doubt extraordinary that the poor soul should write tolerably; but, when she can write tolerably, is not it extraordinary that a Miss Seward should write no better? I am sick of these sweet singers, and advised that when poor Mrs. Yearsley shall have been set at her ease by the subscription, she should drive her cows from the foot of Parnassus and hum no more ditties. For Chatterton, he was a gigantic genius, and might have soared I know not whither. In the poems avowed for his is a line that Rowley nor all the monks in Christendom could or would have written, and which would startle them all for its depth of thought and comprehensive expression from a lad of eighteen—

Reason, a thorn in Revelation's side!

I will read no more of Rousseau; his *Confessions* disgusted me beyond any book I ever opened. His hen, the schoolmistress, Madame de Genlis, the newspapers say, is arrived in London. I nauseate her too; the eggs of education that both he and she laid could not be hatched till the chickens would be ready to die of old age. I revere genius; I have a dear friendship for common sense; I have a partiality for professed nonsense; but I abhor extravagance, that is given for the quintessence of sense, and affectation that pretends to be philosophy. Good night, Madam!

P.S. Pray tell me where your new library is placed. The parson of Teddington and his wife were robbed, at

half an hour after nine last night, by three footpads, with pistols, at my back gate. My housekeeper heard the bustle from her room that is over the Holbein chamber. I was in the library, but knew nothing of the matter till to-day. It is agreeable to have banditti at one's doors!

2537. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 9, 1785.

I am sorry Lord Ossory has any Irish difficulties, great or small.

I made no commentary on General Oglethorpe's death, Madam, because his very long life was the great curiosity, and the moment he is dead the rarity is over; and, as he was but ninety-seven, he will not be a prodigy compared with those who reached to a century and a half. He is like many who make a noise in their own time from some singularity, which is forgotten, when it comes to be registered with others of the same genius, but more extraordinary in their kind. How little will Dr. Johnson be remembered, when confounded with the mass of authors of his own calibre!

I said no more on the Duchess of Bedford's broken wrist, because I did not know of it. The Duchess of Montrose told me she was said to have broken her leg, but that it was not true; and that she had given a public breakfast the next day, but did not appear at it herself, so I concluded she had only miscarried of a broken leg; but ah! Madam, when old folks break their wrists by tottering out of their own houses, is not it a just reason for my not daring to think of clambering up ladders, to range books, at Ampthill, though I should have more pleasure in it than the Duchess could have at a ball at five in the morning? I could delight, too, in playing with Lady Anne's orrery, and I could prattle

on the planet that rolled under your Ladyship's feet; but when I am sensible of the lameness of my feet, why should I be more indulgent to my head? I talked nonsense enough on astronomy in my last, and I will not again violate a maxim that I have laid down to myself, and which I believe so true, that it ought to be repeated daily to old people, like Saladin's 'Remember thou art mortal!' This is my maxim, 'When a man's eyes, ears, or memory decay, he ought to conclude that his understanding decays, too, for the weaker it grows, the less likely he is to perceive it.'

When you send for Mr. Heron's book, you may write too for the seventh volume of the *Archæologia*, in which you will find a few pages amusing, amongst several that don't know their own meaning. I early translated the title of these volumes, *old women's logic*, and seldom do they contradict me—witness the first dissertation in the present, *cum multis aliis*; but there is a very sensible discourse, p. 303, on the religion of the Druids, in which the writer, unlike his companions, demolishes fantastic reverence for barbarians, instead of discovering arts and sciences amongst rude nations, who had nothing but labour and time to spare, and who put one in mind of Lord Abercorn's answer to the gentleman who complimented him on the growth of his trees, 'They had nothing else to do.' I have lately dipped into D'Ancarville's[1] two volumes, in which he ascribes universal knowledge and invention to the Scythians, as Bryant did to the Lord knows whom; but with all my pertinacity in reading quartos, I could not wade through the tautology and impertinence of D'Ancarville's, though he has lately been here to draw a bronze I have of Ceres, with a bull in her lap; and because I have this ugly morsel, I suppose he will call

LETTER 2537.—[1] Pierre François Hugues, known as d'Hancarville (1719–1805), antiquary. In 1785 he published *Recherches sur l'Histoire, l'Origine, l'Esprit, et les Progrès des Arts de la Grèce.*

me *the ingenious and learned*, as Mr. Daines Barrington does; and I had rather they would box my ears, for it is calling one a fool that has taken his degrees. Now I declare I have no more regard for the Phœnicians, Pelasgians, Vics, Egyptians, Edomites, Scythians, and Gentoos, than I have for Madame de Genlis. I read such books as I do Mrs. Bellamy's, and believe in them no more. The one nation worth studying was the Greeks. In the compass of two or three centuries half a dozen little towns, or rather one town, scarce bigger than Brentford, discovered the standard of poetry, eloquence, statuary, architecture, and perhaps of painting and music; and then *the learned* have the impertinence to tell one that the Grecians borrowed from the Egyptians, Tartars, Indians, &c. That is, they stole the genuine principles of all beauty and all taste from every idea of deformity and absurdity! The Apollo and the Venus from mummies and idols with four heads, more hands, and two legs, as immovable as oaks in an avenue! I concentre my admiration in the few centuries of Greece, and for that marvellous period in the Roman history, when five excellent princes, though possessed of absolute power, succeeded to one another, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. This is not learning: the learned are busied in inquiring how long the world has blundered without discovering what was worth knowing.

Sunday.

P.S. After writing my letter, I learnt that by the new arrangement of the post, it would only have lain in town, and could not depart the same night as usual. When I came from Lady Dysart's last night, I found on my table the annual Transactions *de l'Académie* of Arts and Sciences, in which the gold medal to our Lord is recorded; and his gardener's letter, which says he could not make Lombardy poplars grow in wet ground. The lawn beyond my flower-

garden was a morass, that I was forced to have drained, yet before the drains were made, Lombardy poplars grew there astonishingly; and the first I ever saw in England General Conway planted at the foot of his mountain, close to the Thames, and in three years it was of an amazing height.

2538. To Edmond Malone.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1785.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for the favour of your letter, to which I was extremely sorry to have given any occasion, and of which I beg you will give me leave to send you this account.

I live here in so numerous and gossiping a neighbourhood, that I am not only tormented daily by applications for tickets, but several persons have quarrelled with me for not complying with their demands. Nay, I have received letters reproaching me with indulging some of my particular friends with a greater latitude than four; for they are so idle as to watch and count the carriages at my gate. The very day you was here last, Sir, a gentleman and his wife, who came from a neighbour's, were in the house, and I knew would report that I had admitted six, if the carriages were seen; and yet, out of regard to you, Sir, I could not think of disappointing your friends. You was extremely good to favour me; and I hope, by this relation, will see how much I am distressed, though very desirous of obliging. As numbers come to see my house whose names I do not even know, I must limit the number, and I offend if I break my rule. Therefore, last year, I printed those rules, and now should give still greater offence if I did not adhere to them; while the only advantage that accrues to myself is that my

Letter 2538.—Not in C.; reprinted from Prior's *Life of Malone*, p. 121.

evenings are free, and that I keep the month of October for myself.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for troubling you with this detail, but it was due to your politeness, and will, I hope, convince you that I am, Sir, &c., &c.

2539. To Mrs. Dickenson[1].

Dear Madam, Strawberry Hill, July 19, 1785.

By a postscript in a letter I have just received from Mr. Keate, he tells me the Duchess of Portland *is dead*[2]! I did hear at Ditton on Sunday that she had been thought dead, but was much better—still as it comes from Mr. Keate, and as you was so much alarmed when I saw you (and indeed, as I thought her so much altered), I fear it is but too true! you will forgive me therefore for troubling you with inquiring about poor Mrs. Delany[3]! It would be to no purpose to send to her house.

I did intend to be in town on Thursday, but Madame de Genlis has invited herself hither on Friday. I am not sure I shall be able to go on Saturday. I am afraid of missing you, and I want to see our poor friend over against you.

I see a French account of *poor Louisa* advertised—do you know anything of it?

Pray forgive all this trouble; but whom does one tease but good hearts? The bad neither encourage nor indulge one; but will Mr. Dickenson not think me impertinent? Yet I am Your most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2539.—Not in C.; reprinted from Mrs. Delany's *Correspondence*, vol. vi. pp. 262–3.

[1] *Née* Mary Hamilton. See note 1 on letter of Oct. 7, 1783.

[2] Margaret Cavendish Harley, Dowager Duchess of Portland, died on July 17, 1785.

[3] Mrs. Delany was the Duchess's dearest friend, and was with her at Bulstrode when she died.

2540. To Thomas Astle.

Sir, Strawberry Hill, July 19, 1785.

As your great knowledge makes you an oracle, you must excuse your being consulted, and will forgive me, I hope, for troubling you. An acquaintance of mine has a lawsuit for an estate *in Staffordshire*, under a grant of Humphrey Earl of Buckingham to Ralph Macclesfield in tail *of the manor of Meir or Mere* in Staffordshire dated 21st of Henry VI. This manor of Meir is claimed by a grant of Henry VIII in his 26th year to Rowland Lee [1], Bishop of Litchfield, and it says the *Priory of St. Thomas near Stafford* was endowed with it. What is wished to be known is, by whom and at what time that priory was so endowed?

If you, Sir, can be so good as to give any information on this head, you will do great service to the gentleman in possession, and will much oblige

Your most obedient
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

2541. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1785.

I am very sorry to hear that the war of bad seasons, which has lasted eight months, has affected your Ladyship too. I never knew so much illness; but as our natural season, rain, is returned, I hope you will recover from your complaints. English consumptions are attributed to our

Letter 2540.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. Frederick Barker.

[1] Rowland Lee (d. 1543), Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry and Lord President of the Council in the Marches of Wales.

insular damps, but I question whether justly. The air of the sea is an elixir, not a poison; and in the three sultry summers which preceded the three last, it is notorious that our fruits were uncommonly bad, as if they did not know how to behave in hot weather. Nay, it is certain, that in our camps there was scarce any sickness when the tents were swimming; whereas in those Italian summers the contrary was fact. I hope I shall not be contradicted by the experience of last night. Mrs. Keppel had, or rather was to have had, all London at her beautiful villa at Isleworth. Her Grace of Devonshire was to have been there,—ay, you may stare, Madam! and her Grace of Bedford too. The deluge in the morning, the debate in the House of Commons, qualms in the first Duchess, and I don't know what, certainly not *qualms* in the second, detained them, and no soul came from town but Lady Duncannon, Lady Beauchamp[1], the two Miss Vernons[2], the Boltons[3], the Norths, Lord William Russell[4], Charles Wyndham[5], Colonel Gardiner, and Mr. Aston, and none of these arrived till ten at night. Violins were ready, but could not play to no dancers; so at eleven the young people said it was a charming night, and went to paddle on the terrace over the river, while we ancients, to affect being very hot too, sat with all the windows in the bow open, and might as well have been in Greenland! Miss Vernon did not know her brother[6] was set out.

LETTER 2541.—[1] Isabella Anne Ingram (d. 1834), daughter and coheiress of ninth Viscount Irvine; m. (1776), as his second wife, Francis Seymour Conway, Viscount Beauchamp, eldest son of first Earl (afterwards Marquis) of Hertford, whom he succeeded in 1794.

[2] Probably the Misses Caroline and Jane Vernon, daughters of Henry Vernon, of Hilton, Staffordshire, by Lady Harriet Wentworth, sister of the Earl of Strafford.

[3] Perhaps the Duke and Duchess of Bolton.

[4] Third son of Francis Russell, Marquis of Tavistock (eldest son of fourth Duke of Bedford). He was murdered by his valet in 1840.

[5] Hon. Charles William Wyndham, third son of second Earl of Egremont.

[6] Henry Vernon.

You surprise me, Madam, by saying the newspapers mention my disappointment of seeing Madame de Genlis. How can such arrant trifles spread? It is very true, that as the hill would not go to see Madame de Genlis, she has come to see the hill. Ten days ago Mrs. Cosway[7] sent me a note that Madame desired a ticket for Strawberry Hill. I thought I could not do less than offer her a breakfast, and named yesterday se'nnight. Then came a message that she must go to Oxford and take her Doctor's degree; and then another, that I should see her yesterday, when she did arrive with Miss Wilkes and Pamela[8], whom she did not even present to me, and whom she has educated to be very like herself in the face. I told her I could not attribute the honour of her visit but to my late dear friend Madame du Deffand. It rained the whole time, and was dark as midnight, so that she could scarce distinguish a picture; but you will want an account of her, and not of what she saw or could not see. Her person is agreeable, and she seems to have been pretty. Her conversation is natural and reasonable, not *précieuse* and affected, and searching to be eloquent, as I had expected. I asked her if she had been pleased with Oxford, meaning the buildings, not the wretched oafs that inhabit it. She said she had had little time; that she had wished to learn their plan of education, which, as she said sensibly, she supposed was adapted to our constitution. I could have told her that it is directly repugnant to our constitution, and that nothing is taught there but drunkenness and prerogative, or, in

[7] Maria Cecilia Louisa, daughter of an innkeeper at Leghorn named Hadfield. She married Richard Cosway the painter in 1781. She was herself an artist and exhibited at the Royal Academy. The date of her death is unknown.

[8] Pamela is commonly supposed to have been natural daughter of Madame de Genlis by the Duc de Chartres. She married Lord Edward Fitzgerald in 1792. Not long after Lord Edward's death she married Pitcairn, American Consul at Hamburg.

their language, Church and King. I asked if it is true that the new edition of Voltaire's works is prohibited: she replied, severely,—and then condemned those who write against religion and government, which was a little unlucky before her friend *Miss Wilkes*. She stayed two hours, and returns to France to-day *to her duty*. I really do not know whether the Duc de Chartres is in England or not. She did lodge in his house in Portland Place; but at Paris, I think, has an hotel where she educates his daughters.

Mr. Horace Walpole (not myself) called on me yesterday morning, when no will of the Duchess of Portland had been found. He thinks the bulk of the collection will be sold, but that the Duke will reserve the principal curiosities: I hope so, for I should long for some of them, and am become too poor to afford them; besides that, it is ridiculous to treat oneself with playthings, when one's eyes are closing.

I hope the visit to Lady Ravensworth and fresh grass will restore your Ladyship's health and looks. I send this response to Ampthill, as you have given me no direction.

2542. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, July 25, 1785.

Before I reply to the other parts of your letter of the 5th, which I have just received, I must tell you how rejoiced I am to hear of your having the gout in your knees and feet. Let me entreat you to encourage and keep it there: indulge them in yards of flannel, and lie much in bed; never rise when they have any perspiration; they will cure your cough, and you cannot be too grateful to them. This effort shows the strength and excellence of your constitution, and will preserve you long: for my part, I had

rather lie in bed than attend regal puppet-shows; and I always make the most of my gout, when it is to excuse my doing anything I don't like.

I love your nephew better than ever for his attention to you. Mr. Croft has given me a most excellent character of Mr. James [1], who, I hope, will repay to your nephew his affection and care of you.

I have not the honour of being acquainted with Lady Hampden [2]; Mrs. Trevor [3] I do know, who is gentle and pleasing. Lady Hampden's mother, whom I see often at the Duchess of Montrose's, is very amiable, and a favourite of mine.

Though three millions sterling [4] from the plunder of convents is a plump bellyful, I don't believe the Austrian Eagle will stop there, nor be satisfied with private property. No: I told you, I believe, when I read the new History of the Medici, that Cæsar had set that work on foot as a preparative to his urging his claim to what the Church of Rome had formerly usurped from his predecessors. He has shown that he thinks nothing *holy* but the Holy Roman Empire. It is the nature of the Church and the sceptre to league against the rest of mankind, and abet each other till they have engrossed everything: then they quarrel; and the mightier strips the weaker, as our Henry the Eighth did. One can care little about the upshot of such squabbles. Were I to form a wish, it would be in favour of the Pontiff rather than of the Emperor; *as churchmen make conquests by sense and art, not by force and bloodshed, like princes.*

LETTER 2542.—[1] Mr. James Mann, mentioned in a preceding letter. *Walpole.*

[2] Daughter of General Graeme, and wife of the second Viscount Hampden. *Walpole.*

[3] Wife of the second son of the first Viscount: Mr. Trevor was Envoy to Turin. *Walpole.*

[4] Sir H. Mann had told Mr. Walpole that the Emperor had acquired three millions by the suppression of convents. *Walpole.*

As I have not been in London for this month till last night, I am utterly unqualified to send you news, if there are any. The Parliament is still sitting on the Irish propositions, which, I believe, are almost settled on this side of the Channel. Then they are to be sent to Dublin; and, if accepted there, the English Parliament is to meet again in October to ratify them. In the meantime politicians will do nothing but kill partridges.

The balloonomania is, I think, a little chilled, not extinguished, by Rozier's[5] catastrophe. That it should still blaze in my nephew[6] is not surprising; not that he has mounted himself,—he did threaten it: but real madmen are not heroes, though heroes are real madmen. He did encourage another man, who, seeing a storm coming on, would have desisted: but my Lord cried, 'Oh, you had better ascend before the storm arrives,' and instantly cut the strings; and away went the *airgonaut*, and did *not* break his neck!

The Duchess Dowager of Portland[7] is dead; by which the Duke, her son, gets twelve thousand pounds a year. The greatest part of her great collection will be sold.

This is all I have to tell you or your nephew; and, little as it is, I send it away to express my satisfaction on your having the gout in your limbs, rather than wait for more matter, which probably I should not have soon. I repeat my earnest desire to you to keep your limbs warm. You will tell me perhaps that the season of the year makes that counsel unnecessary. I mean, that you should be very

[5] Pilâtre de Rozier.

[6] George, Earl of Orford. *Walpole.*

[7] Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles Harley, widow of the second, and mother of the third Duke of Portland. She was only child of Robert, second Earl of Oxford, by the sole daughter and heiress of the last Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, from whom she inherited that great estate. She had made a vast collection of natural history and various other curiosities, the greater part of which was sold by auction in the year following. *Walpole.*—The Duke of Newcastle mentioned was a Holles, not a Cavendish.

careful not to check perspiration. I am perfectly recovered from my last fit; and am persuaded you will be so too, if you let the gout take its full career. It comes exactly to offer you health; and, as your feet swell, I presume upon easy terms. I have so good an opinion of the gout, that, when I am told of an infallible cure, I laugh the proposal to scorn, and declare I do not desire to be cured. I am serious; and, though I do not believe there is any cure for that distemper, I should say the same if there were one, and for this reason: I believe the gout a remedy, not a disease; and, being so, no wonder there is no medicine for it—nor do I desire to be cured of a remedy. Adieu!

2543. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, July 27, 1785.

You thank me much more than the gift deserved, Sir: my editions of such pieces as I have left are waste paper to me. I will not sell them at the ridiculously advanced prices that are given for them: indeed, only such as were published for sale, have I sold at all; and therefore the duplicates that remain with me are to me of no value, but when I can oblige a friend with them. Of a few of my impressions I have no copy but my own set; and, as I could give you only an imperfect collection, the present was really only a parcel of fragments. My memory was in fault about the *R. and N. Authors*; I thought I had given them to you. I recollect now that I only lent you my own copy; but I have others in town, and you shall have them when I go thither. For Vertue's manuscript I am in no manner of haste. I heard on Monday, in London, that the *Letters* were written by a Mr. Pilkington, probably from a confounded information of Maty's review: my chief reason for calling on you twice this week was to learn what

you had heard, and I shall be much obliged to you for farther information; as I do not care to be too inquisitive, lest I should be suspected of knowing more of the matter.

There are many reasons, Sir, why I cannot come into your idea of printing Greek[1]. In the first place, I have two or three engagements for my press: and my time of life does not allow me to look but a little way farther. In the next, I cannot now go into new expenses of purchase: my fortune is very much reduced, both by my brother's death, and by the late plan of reformation. The last reason would weigh with me, had I none of the others. My admiration of the Greeks was a little like that of the mob on other points, not from sound knowledge. I never was a good Greek scholar; have long forgotten what I knew of the language; and, as I never disguise my ignorance of anything, it would look like affectation to print Greek authors. I could not bear to print them, without owning that I do not understand them; and such a confession would perhaps be as much affectation as unfounded pretensions. I must, therefore, stick to my simplicity, and not go out of my line. It is difficult to divest oneself of vanity, because impossible to divest oneself of self-love. If one runs from one glaring vanity, one is catched by its opposite. Modesty can be as vain-glorious on the ground, as Pride on a triumphal car. Modesty, however, is preferable; for, should she contradict her professions, still she keeps her own secret, and does not hurt the pride of others. I have the honour to be, Sir, with great regard, yours.

LETTER 2543.—[1] Pinkerton suggested that Walpole should print an edition of Anacreon at Strawberry Hill.

2544. To Thomas Astle.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 5, 1785.

I DEFERRED my thanks, Sir, for the very ready and obliging manner with which you was so good as to comply with my late request[1], till I could tell you the event of *Mr. Fitzwilliam's*[2] *cause*, which has been entirely successful, and to which *I believe your very clear information contributed.* If you was pass[ing] any time this season after the beginning of next week, I shall be very happy to have the pleasure of thanking you in person, as I have the honour to be, with great regard, Sir,

Your much obliged
And obedient humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

2545. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 10, 1785.

I WAS just getting into my chaise with Mr. Jerningham to go to Park Place on Friday, when I received the honour of your Ladyship's letter, and consequently could not answer it so punctually as I generally do. We saw the new bridge at Henley, which is complete on one side, and is most beautiful; the bend of the arch was regulated by General Conway himself, on three centres, and for grace does not veil the bonnet to the Ponte di Trinità at Florence. His daughter's[1] head of the Thame is placed, and has charming effect. The Isis is fixed too, but not yet uncovered. They are going, not the Thame and Isis, but the father and daughter, with the Duke of Richmond to Jersey,

Letter 2544.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. Frederick Barker.

[1] See letter to Astle of July 19, 1785.

[2] The Hon. Thomas Fitzwilliam.

Letter 2545.—[1] The Hon. Mrs. Damer.

and I hope the sea air will be of service to her, for I think her far from well.

I had heard, Madam, of Lady Euston's felicity in being agreeable to Lady Ravensworth, and my niece being charmed with her Ladyship. This was no flattery, for it came to me indirectly from a letter to her sister Horatia[2]. Indeed I trust that Lady Euston's calm temper and good sense, which resemble her father's, will always answer to the character I have constantly given of her, and which is just the reverse of what that Tisiphone Lady Greenwich coined for her—or rather lent her from her own super-abundant fund of bad qualities.

I have heard since my return that Sir William Hamilton's renowned vase[3], which had disappeared with so much mystery, is again discovered; not in the tomb, but in the treasury of the Duchess of Portland, in which I fancy it had made ample room for itself. He told me it would never go out of England. I do not see how he could warrant that. The Duke and Lord Edward[4] have both shown how little stability there is in the riches of that family; and *mine* has felt how insecure the permanency of heirlooms! Lawyers, though so like in many points, are, in respect of their own code, the reverse of churchmen, and set it aside just as they please.

A mightier potentate[5], who sets aside codes too, without ceremony, is going to sell part of his plunder by auction at Brussels. I have seen the catalogues of the jewels and pictures that are to be sold; and I took the trouble of counting them. Of pictures there are above three hundred and thirty; yet, by some numbers left in the margin, it

[2] Lady Horatia Waldegrave.

[3] The 'Portland Vase,' purchased from one Byres, an architect, by Hamilton, and sold by him to the Duchess for eighteen hundred guineas.

[4] Lord Edward Bentinck. See note 2 on letter to Mason of July 10, 1782.

[5] The Emperor Joseph II.

looks as if there were not half a quarter of the forfeitures, though I can scarce believe that his Imperial Rapacity loves the arts better than money. Sir Joshua Reynolds is gone to see them; yet there are but three of Rubens, two of Vandyck, one of Snyder, and half a dozen of Jordaens. The rest are of old Flemish masters, and most being large altar-pieces and too big for private houses, I should think would not sell well. It is said that the Catholics will not purchase such sacrilegious goods; but we virtuosos are seldom so scrupulous.

Of pearls there are more than seventeen thousand, probably small; and four thousand and six hundred diamonds, all roses, besides table diamonds. I used to imagine that most of the precious stones one sees in churches were false, concluding priests were too wise to lose the interest of their treasures. However, this sale confirms a contradictory opinion that I formed long ago; which was, that the bushels of diamonds, rubies, and pearls, with which the portraits of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth are so gorgeously decked, had been embezzled from convents. The present profusion will lower their own value.

Cæsar is said to have already realized three millions sterling by the suppression of monachism; and by that wealth he will purchase a deluge of blood! *Such reformers* make one regret Popery! Indeed, Mother Reformation herself was too dearly purchased. Had I been Luther, and been really conscientious, which I doubt whether he was, and could have foreseen by what torrents of gore the Church was to be purified, I should have asked myself whether, for the benefit of any number of future millions of souls, I had a right to occasion the slaughter of a present million of lives; I should have hesitated on my mission, and I believe not have taken out my patent.

I have been told that when this Austrian bird of prey set about his reform, the nobility of Flanders presented a memorial to him, observing that most of the monastic had not been royal foundations, and therefore they hoped from his Imperial equity that he would restore to the respective families the lands which their ancestors had given away from their posterity to the Church. Cæsar made no reply, for he could make none that had common sense—but he did not seize an acre or a ducat the less.

Don't imagine that I am changing sides, Madam, because I have some *High Church* qualms. It is laudable to suppress convents; but it ought to be done by forbidding any more persons to be professed. It is inhuman to turn those adrift who either entered conscientiously or are too old to seek a new livelihood by new professions. Besides, when those dear friends the crown and the Church fall out, I adhere to the latter. Priests get their wealth or power by sense and address; monarchs by force and bloodshed: I am for sharpers against cut-throats.

2546. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 18, 1785.

I am sorry, dear Sir, that I must give you unanswerable reasons why I cannot print the work you recommend. I have been so much solicited since I set up my press to employ it for others, that I was forced to make it a rule to listen to no such application. I refused Lord Hardwicke to print a publication of his; Lady Mary Forbes[1], to print letters of her ancestor, Lord Essex; and the Countess of Aldborough, to print her father's poems, though in a piece

Letter 2546.—[1] Lady Mary Capel, fourth daughter of third Earl of Essex; m. (1758) Admiral the Hon. John Forbes, second son of third Earl of Granard; d. 1782.

as small as what you mention. These I recollect at once, besides others whose recommendations do not immediately occur to my memory; though I dare to say *they* do remember them, and would resent my breaking my rule. I have other reasons which I will not detail now, as the post goes out so early: I will only beg you not to treat me with so much ceremony, nor ever use the word *humbly* to me, who am no ways entitled to such respect. One private gentleman is not superior to another in essentials: I fear the virtues of an untainted young heart are preferable to those of an old man long conversant with the world; and in the soundness of understanding you have shown and will show a depth which has not fallen to the lot of

Your sincere humble servant.

P.S. I will call on you in a few days, and say more on the particulars in your letter.

2547. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 19, 1785.

I am glad your Lord is returned so soon, Madam, and has dispatched so many prospects, and recovered of a law-suit, with which I did not know he was afflicted. His expedition and success would qualify him for an ambassador, if to be qualified for an office were a recommendation. I have oft been puzzled to guess why so many fools are sent about Europe on that employment, which seems to demand the utmost sagacity, shrewdness, and industry. At last I conceived this solution of my wonder: the incapacities selected are doubtless chosen for the resemblance they bear to the characters of the august personages they are to represent—an observation that escaped the great Wicqfort himself. But perhaps he adapted his precepts to the wise remark of

a Spanish grandee to one of the Philips: 'Your Majesty's self is but a ceremony.' Consequently the copy ought not to be of more value than the original.

The newspapers told us of Mr. Murray's elopement. Pray is not it too juvenile a prank at his time of life? And how came the nymph to overlook that circumstance? A Scot, too, to commit a disinterested imprudence—strange!

The Duchess of Portland was a simple woman, but perfectly sober, and intoxicated only by *empty* vases. Other Duchesses, it seems, can grow tipsy with lemonade. *The* vase, the two thousand pounder, is, I hear, to be sold again: but who is to buy it? Lady Frances Douglas tells me, from the present Duchess of Portland, that there are great uncertainties about the will, and that they find it difficult to distinguish what is to be sold, and what not—so probably the lawyers may get more than the auctioneer.

The Bristol lunatic's[1] is a more moving story even than the Heliconian milkwoman's[2]. Miss Hannah More, who is humanity itself, has laboured in the service of both; but the former's case is desperate.

I am much flattered, Madam, by Lady Ravensworth's reading a book on my recommendation, and more by her liking it. I have read it three times, and admired the sensible parts more the last time than the first. If the author[3] can arrive at judgement enough to winnow his grain from the chaff, I think he will make a great figure. He might be bold, without being extravagant. What I most dislike in so eccentric and daring a writer, is his patience in translating a whole *Spectator* into his gibberish. Patience is, of all others, the virtue that seems the least congenial to

LETTER 2547.—[1] The unfortunate 'Louisa.'

[2] Mrs. Yearsley.

[3] John Pinkerton; the book alluded to is his *Letters on Literature*, published under the name of 'Robert Heron.'

genius; perseverance is nearer allied to madness than to originality.

As this is a letter of scraps and replies, I will add an answer that I forgot to make to a former question of your Ladyship. Pamela is a child, which Madame de Genlis gives out is an English girl, and which she is said to foster with more attention than her own children, or than the princesses[4] of Orléans, to whom she is gover*nor*, for so she is styled. Sceptics pretend that Pamela is both her own child and a spurious Orléanoise. For fondness, I did not perceive the least; the resemblance is less obscure.

The Irish propositions[5] seem to me to be brooding a storm. Methinks we have a strange propensity to gaming for our own dominions! France, like an old blacklegs, sits by, till the parties are heated, and she can strip the winner. I believe I shall live till we have not a whole island left to our back.

Friday night.

I wrote my last letter after dinner, before I went to the Duchess of Montrose. The moment after I arrived, Mr. Cambridge, who, rather than not be the first to trumpet a piece of news, would tell anybody the most disagreeable news, sent a card to acquaint the Duke and Duchess that, after a long debate, Mr. Orde had withdrawn his Irish Bill[6]. This

[4] The Duc de Chartres had only one daughter—Louise Marie Adelaide Eugénie, known as Mlle. d'Orléans. She died unmarried in 1847.

[5] A bill (which had already passed the Irish House of Commons) for 'regulating the intercourse and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland on permanent and equitable principles,' introduced by Pitt on Aug. 2, 1785. It passed, but was considerably modified in its progress through the English Parliament.

[6] Thomas Orde (1746–1807), afterwards Orde-Paulet; cr. (Oct. 20, 1797) Baron Bolton, of Bolton Castle, Yorkshire. As Chief Secretary for Ireland it fell to Mr. Orde to introduce the 'Irish propositions' in their modified form into the Irish House of Commons. The bill was fiercely attacked and only carried by nineteen on the first division. 'All that Orde could effect was to obtain an order that the bill should be read a first time and printed for circulation through Ireland, 15 Aug., 1785. It was then dropped.' (*D.N.B.*, art. Orde, Thomas.)

occasioned a consternation, and then a dead silence. I don't believe the officious intelligencer will be thanked; however, I trust this defeat will have saved us from another civil war!

2548. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 26, 1785.

Though I am delighted to see your handwriting, I beg you will indulge me no more with it. It fatigues you, and that gives me more pain than your letters can give me satisfaction. Dictate a few words on your health to your secretary; it will suffice. I don't care a straw about the King and Queen of Naples, nor whether they visit your little Great Duke and Duchess. I am glad when monarchs are playing with one another, instead of scratching: it is better they should be idle than mischievous. As I desire you *not* to write, I cannot be alarmed at a strange hand.

Your philosophic account of yourself is worthy of you. Still, I am convinced you are better than you seem to think. A cough is vexatious, but in old persons is a great preservative. It is one of the forms in which the gout appears, and exercises and clears the lungs. I know actually two persons, no chickens, who are always very ill if they have no annual cough. You may imagine that I have made observations in plenty on the gout: yes, yes, I know its ways and its jesuitic evasions. I beg its pardon, it is a better soul than it appears to be; it is we that misuse it: if it does not appear with all its credentials, we take it for something else, and attempt to cure it. Being a remedy, and not a disease, it will not be cured; and it is better to let it have its way. If it is content to act the personage of a cough, pray humour it: it will prolong your life, if you do not contradict it and fling it somewhere else.

The administration has received a total defeat in Ireland, which has probably saved us another civil war. Don't wonder that I am continually recollecting my father's *Quieta non movere.* I have never seen that maxim violated with impunity. They say that in town a change in the ministry is expected. I am not of that opinion; but, indeed, nobody can be more ignorant than I. I see nobody here but people attached to the court, and who, however, know no more than I do; and if I did see any of the other side, they would not be able to give me better information; nor am I curious.

A stranger event than a revolution in politics has happened at Paris. The Cardinal de Rohan[1] is committed to the Bastile for forging the Queen's hand to obtain a collar of diamonds; I know no more of the story: but, as he is very gallant, it is guessed (*here* I mean) that it was for a present to some woman. These circumstances are little Apostolic, and will not prop the falling Church of Rome. They used to forge donations and decretals. This is a new manœuvre. Nor were Cardinals wont to be treated so cavalierly for peccadilloes. The house of Rohan is under a cloud: his Eminence's cousin, the Prince of Guémené, was forced to fly, two or three years ago, for being the

LETTER 2548. — [1] The Cardinal Louis René Édouard de Rohan (1734–1803), Grand Almoner of France and Bishop of Strasburg. On the strength of a forged signature of Marie Antoinette, supplied by a certain Comtesse de la Motte, the Cardinal struck a bargain in the Queen's name (as he thought) with Boehmer, the court jeweller, for a valuable diamond necklace, which had already been offered to and refused by the Queen. The bargain was concluded on Jan. 29, 1785, when it was arranged that the Queen should pay by instalments. On Feb. 1 the necklace was delivered to the Cardinal, who conveyed it to Versailles, to be given over to the Queen's confidential agent. One of the Comtesse's accomplices personated the agent, and received the necklace, which was immediately broken up and conveyed out of France. When the first instalment of the price fell due, Boehmer presented his account to the Queen, who denied all knowledge of the transaction. In consequence of the part played in the affair by the Cardinal, he was arrested on Aug. 15, 1785.

prince of swindlers. *Our* nabobs are not treated so roughly; yet I doubt they collect diamonds still more criminally.

Your nephew will be sorry to hear that the Duke of Montrose's third grandson, Master William Douglas, died yesterday of a fever. These poor Montroses are most unfortunate persons! They had the comfort this spring of seeing Lord Graham [2] marry: the Duchess said, 'I thought I should die of grief, and now I am ready to die of joy.' Lady Graham soon proved with child, but soon miscarried; and the Duke and Duchess may not live to have the consolation of seeing an heir—for we must hope and make visions to the last! *I* am asking for samples of Ginori's porcelain at sixty-eight! Well! are not heirs to great names and families as frail foundations of happiness? and what signifies what baubles we pursue? Philosophers make systems, and we simpletons collections: and we are as wise as they—wiser perhaps, for we know that in a few years our rarities will be dispersed at an auction; and they flatter themselves that their reveries will be immortal, which has happened to no system yet. A curiosity may rise in value; a system is exploded.

Such reflections are applicable to politics, and make me look on them as equally nugatory. Last year Mr. Fox was burnt in effigy; now Mr. Pitt is. Oh, my dear Sir, it is all a farce! On *this day*, about an hundred years ago (look at my date), was born the wisest man [3] I have seen. He kept this country in peace for twenty years, and it flourished accordingly. He injured no man; was benevolent,

[2] The Marquis of Graham married the eldest daughter of the Earl of Ashburnham. His only sister, Lady Lucy, had been married to Archibald Douglas, the contested heir of the Duke of Douglas, and had died young, leaving three sons and a daughter. The Duke had been blind for thirty years, and the Duchess was paralytic. *Walpole.*

[3] Sir Robert Walpole, first Earl of Orford, Prime Minister to George I and II. *Walpole.*

good-humoured, and did nothing but the common necessary business of the state. Yet was he burnt in effigy too; and so traduced, that his name is not purified yet!—Ask why his memory is not in veneration? You will be told, from libels and trash, that he was *the Grand Corrupter.*—What! did he corrupt the nation to make it happy, rich, and peaceable? Who was oppressed during his administration? Those saints Bolingbroke and Pulteney were kept out of the paradise of the court; ay, and the Pretender was kept out and was kept quiet. Sir Robert fell: a rebellion ensued in four years, and the crown shook on the King's head. The nation too, which had been tolerably corrupted before his time, and which, with all its experience and with its eyes opened, has not cured itself of being corrupt, is not quite so prosperous as in the day of that man, who, it seems, poisoned its morals. Formerly it was the most virtuous nation on earth!

Under Henry VIII and his children there was no persecution, no fluctuation of religion: their ministers shifted their faith four times, and were sincere honest men! There was no servility, no flattery, no contempt of the nation abroad, under James I. No tyranny under Charles I and Laud; no factions, no civil war! Charles II, however, brought back all the virtues and morality, which, somehow or other, were missing! His brother's was a still more blessed reign, though in a different way! King William was disturbed and distressed by no contending factions, and did not endeavour to bribe them to let him pursue his great object of humbling France! The Duke of Marlborough was not overborne in a similar and more glorious career by a detestable cabal!—and if Oxford and Bolingbroke did remove him, from the most patriot motives, they, good men! used no corruption! Twelve peerages showered at once, to convert the House of Lords, were no bribes; nor

was a shilling issued for secret services; nor would a member of either House have received it!

Sir R. Walpole came, and, strange to tell, found the whole Parliament, and every Parliament, at least a great majority of every Parliament, ready to take his money. For what?—to undo their country!—which, however, wickedly as he meant, and ready as they were to concur, he left in every respect in the condition he found it, except in being improved in trade, wealth, and tranquillity; till *its friends* who expelled him, had dipped their poor country in a war; which was far from mending its condition. Sir Robert died, foretelling a rebellion, which happened in less than six months, and for predicting which he had been ridiculed: and in detestation of a maxim ascribed to him by his enemies, that *every man has his price*, the tariff of every Parliament since has been as well known as the price of beef and mutton; and the universal electors, who cry out against that traffic, are not a jot less vendible than their electors. — Was not Sir Robert Walpole an abominable minister?

29th.

P. S. The man who certainly provoked Ireland *to think* is dead—Lord Sackville [4].

30th.

I see, by the *Gazette*, that Lord Cowper's pinchbeck principality is allowed. I wonder his Highness does not desire the Pope to make one of his sons a bishop *in partibus infidelium*.

[4] Lord George Sackville Germaine, third son of Lionel, Duke of Dorset, who, when secretary to his father, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, gave rise, by his haughty behaviour, to the factions that have ever since disturbed that country, and at last shaken off its submission to this country. *Walpole.*

2549. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Aug. 29, 1785.

It is flattering, and too flattering to me, Madam, to be supposed the author of the *Letters on Literature*. The writer has much more variety of knowledge, and of useful knowledge, and a sounder understanding than I have; though I do not think that even thirty years ago I should have written so rashly as he has done, nor so fantastically. Far was it ever from my thoughts to admire Dr. Akenside (and to commend him in a work that excommunicates imitators!) or to depreciate Boileau, or not to think Molière a genius of the first water. Who upon earth has written such perfect comedies? for *The Careless Husband* is but one—*The Nonjuror* was built on *The Tartuffe*; and if *The Man of Mode*[1] and Vanbrugh are excellent, they are too indelicate — and Congreve, who beats all for wit, is not always natural; still less, simple. In fact I disagree with Mr. Heron, as often as I subscribe to him; and though I am an enthusiast to original genius, I cannot forget that there are two classes of authors to be venerated; they who invent, and they who perfect: who has been so original as to exclude improvements?

Well, Madam, but I not only am not the author of the *Letters*, but, *upon my veracity*, I never saw a line of them, nor knew such a work was in embryo, till it was left at my house in full impression.

Should a doubt remain with any man (your Ladyship I flatter myself will not question my truth) I will give him an irrecusable proof of my not having had a hand in these *Letters*, if he will have patience to wait for it; and that is, that the author will write better than he has done twenty years after I shall be underground. In short, it

Letter 2549. — [1] *The Careless Husband* and *The Nonjuror* are by Colley Cibber; *The Man of Mode* is by Etherege.

is a capacity that will improve by maturity, for it will be corrected by opponents; if it is not hardened into the defence of paradoxes by defending them too ingeniously; as was the misfortune of Rousseau, who might have excelled by writing good sense, but found that there was a shorter path to celebrity by climbing the precipice of absurdity.

I cannot make the same excuse for the pious editors of Dr. Johnson's *Prayers*: see what it is to have friends too honest! How could men be such idiots as to execute such a trust? One laughs at every page, and then the tears come into one's eyes when one learns what the poor being suffered, who even suspected his own madness! One seems to be reading the diary of an old almswoman; and, in fact, his religion was not a step higher in its kind. Johnson had all the bigotry of a monk, and all the folly and ignorance too. He sets himself penances of reading two hundred verses of the Bible per day; proposes to learn high Dutch and Italian at past sixty, and at near seventy *begins* to think of examining the proofs (p. 160) of that religion which he had believed so implicitly. So anile was his faith, that on a fast-day he reproaches himself with putting a little milk into his coffee inadvertently! Can one check a smile when, in his old age, one might say his dotage, he tried to read Vossius on baptism?—No wonder he could only *try*!—but one laughs out, when about a dozen years before his death, he confesses he had never yet read the Apocrypha, though when a boy he had heard the story of Bel and the Dragon. I wonder he did not add, and of Jack the Giant-killer—for such blind faith might easily have confounded the impressions of his first childhood, which lasted uninterrupted to his second.

Methinks the specimen, and Rousseau's *Confessions*, should be lessons against keeping journals, which poor Johnson thought such an excellent nostrum for a good life. How



Dr. Burney

From a drawing by George Dance R.A.

foolish might we all appear, if we registered every delirium! Johnson certainly had strong sense at intervals—of how little use was it to himself!—but what drivellers are his disciples, who think they honour him by laying open his every weakness!

If the Cardinal de Rohan has any biographers, or *sincere friends*, the narrative will be very different. He is in the Bastile for forging the Queen's signature to obtain a collar of diamonds: it is supposed for a present to some woman, for his Eminence is very gallant. He is out of luck; he might not have been sent to Newgate here for using the Queen's name to get diamonds[2].

Lady Waldegrave, I flatter myself, is very well, Madam: she is at Navestock.

2549*. To Dr. Burney.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 6, 1785.

Mr. Walpole is very happy that Dr. Burney can oblige him with his company on Thursday evening, but shall certainly not let him sleep anywhere else, nor consent to his going away next day, if he can possibly keep him.

If it is not too much to ask, Mr. Walpole would be exceedingly flattered if Dr. Burney would bring Miss Burney with him. Her maid shall be lodged too or Mr. W.'s housekeeper shall attend her; and if Dr. Burney and Cecilia will grant him this favour, he shall think it as great an one as if Dorset's self had blessed his roof[1].

[2] An allusion to the Queen's acceptance of some diamonds from Warren Hastings.

Letter 2549*. — Not in C.; reprinted by kind permission of Archdeacon Burney, owner of the original letter.

[1] 'Among the guests, which e'er my house
Receiv'd, it never can produce
Of honour a more glorious proof—
Though Dorset used to bless the roof.'
Prior, *Extempore Invitation to the Earl of Oxford.*

2550. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1785.

I did conclude, Madam, that the shooting campaign being opened, you would be pitching your tents in Northamptonshire. Joseph II, who is as keen a sportsman as Lord Ossory, is going to shoot in Holland; Lord Rodney, who is just arrived from Spa, brings, that forty thousand men are on their march. Others add, that this Imperial murderer is in danger from a swelling in his side—I hope he will die soon! His death would save two hundred thousand lives to Europe at least.

A thousand thanks to your Ladyship for the communication of Lady Ravensworth's letter, which I return. She has expressed in two words the idea that I have tried to give you in many, of Lady Euston's disposition: *calm sweetness and good sense* describe her exactly. I hope they will always make her worthy of Lady Ravensworth's goodness and Lord Euston's partiality. Mr. Fitzpatrick's for me is not so justly founded; yet I am flattered by it, as perhaps one always is, when rated too highly, at least that is the common opinion; though I confess I imagine that I am humbled in my own eyes, when I feel conscious of not deserving what is said of me.

Will not humility look affected, Madam, when in the same breath I ask how I may send you a new book printed here, which might blow up some fumes of vanity in a head that had not been so severely disciplined by the owner as mine? It is the translation of my *Essay on Modern Gardens* by the Duc de Nivernois. I believe I mentioned it to your Ladyship. You will find it a most beautiful piece of French, of the genuine French spoken by the Duc de la Rochefoucauld and Madame de Sévigné, and not the meta-

physical *galimatias* of La Harpe and Thomas, &c., which Madame du Deffand protested she did not understand. The versions of Milton and Pope are wonderfully exact and poetic and elegant, and the fidelity of the whole translation, extraordinary. Some passages, not quite tender to his country, I was surprised that he did not cashier.

Of the Cardinal de Rohan I know nothing new, but that he absolutely now denies the charge. Indeed I am not at all *au fait* of the story; but I hear that Gray, the celebrated cutler, happening to be lately at Paris, was near being sent to the Bastile, as they suspected he was concerned in transmitting some of the stolen jewels, which are in England. Some say the whole was a plot of the Queen and Mons. de Breteuil, her creature—but how or why, I am ignorant.

Have you heard the history of our Madame de Maintenon? *There* I am of the best authority: I know many particulars from her own mouth. In short, *la Veuve* Delany, not Scarron, sent her woman to Windsor to get by heart the ichnography of the hotel granted to her[1]. When she had made herself mistress of details, she went to dine at the White Hart. She was recalled by a page to Miss Goldsworthy[2], who told her it was his Majesty's command that she should bring down nothing but her lady's clothes and the boxes of her maids, for Louis le Grand[3] is very considerate: she must bring no plate, china, linen, wine, &c.; all would be ready; and, when exhausted, she must not acquaint Mrs. Delany, but the aforesaid page. Louis himself pointed out where Mlle. Daubigny[4], the great-niece, should sleep,

LETTER 2550.—[1] As Mrs. Delany's summer visits to Bulstrode ceased on the death of the Dowager Duchess of Portland, the King and Queen presented her with a house at Windsor, together with a pension of 300*l.* a year to meet the expense of her new establishment.

[2] Sub-Governess to the daughters of George III.

[3] The King.

[4] Georgiana Mary Ann Port, great-niece of Mrs. Delany, here called 'Mlle. Daubigny' in allusion to Françoise d'Aubigné (afterwards Duchesse de Noailles), the niece of Madame de Maintenon. Miss Port practically lived with Mrs. Delany.

'and that room her nephew may use.' When the new favourite arrived, Louis himself was at the door to hand her out of the chaise; there ends my journal. Others say that after a short visit, *elle le renvoyoit triste, mais point désespéré*[5]. Lady Harcourt will be as jealous as the Montespan was.

My own history and gazette will both be very brief. Dr. Burney and his daughter, Evelina-Cecilia, have passed a day and a half with me. He is lively and agreeable; she half-and-half sense and modesty, which possess her so entirely, that not a cranny is left for affectation or pretension. Oh! Mrs. Montagu; you are not above half as accomplished.

Next, I have been two days in town to meet Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury. We went to see the Prince's new palace in Pall Mall[6]; and were charmed. It will be the most perfect in Europe. There is an august simplicity that astonished me. You cannot call it magnificent; it is the taste and propriety that strike. Every ornament is at a proper distance, and not one too large, but all delicate and new, with more freedom and variety than Greek ornaments; and, though probably borrowed from the Hôtel de Condé and other new palaces, not one that is not rather classic than French. As Gobert, who was a cook, and who was going to play the devil at Chatsworth and painted the old pilasters of the court there pea-green, designed the decorations, I expected a more tawdry assemblage of fantastic vagaries than in Mrs. Cornelys's masquerade-rooms. I beg his pardon—the Black Prince would not have blushed to

She married Benjamin Waddington, of Llanover, and was the mother of Lady Llanover, the editor of the *Correspondence of Mrs. Delany*.

[5] 'La nouvelle favorite, Madame de Maintenon . . . écrivait un jour [à propos du Roi] à Madame de Frontenac, sa cousine, en qui elle avait une entière confiance: "*Je le renvoie toujours affligé, et jamais désespéré.*"' (Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ch. xxvii.)

[6] Carlton House.

banquet his royal prisoner in so modest a dwelling. There are three most spacious apartments, all looking on the lovely garden, a *terreno*, the state apartment, and an attic. The portico, vestibule, hall, and staircase will be superb, and, to my taste, full of perspectives; the jewel of all is a small music-room, that opens into a green recess and winding walk of the garden. In all the fairy tales you have been, you never was in so pretty a scene, Madam: I forgot to tell you how admirably all the carving, stucco, and ornaments are executed; but whence the money is to come I conceive not—all the tin mines in Cornwall would not pay a quarter. How sick one shall be after this chaste palace, of Mr. Adam's gingerbread and sippets of embroidery!

You have heard of all the late deaths and self-murders to be sure, Madam. I am very sorry for my cousin, Edward Conway[7], who was a most amiable young man, but his case has long been thought desperate. His sister, Lady Bel, is going to be married to a Mr. Hatton, in Ireland.

I shall divert you more by my conclusion than by this long letter, though it may serve, as you are in the woods[8], and I am alone in a dark wet evening, and therefore will make no excuses. Well! but my conclusion; oh, Sir Harry Englefield told me of a new parody of the Christ-cross row[9], of which he could remember but the first line, and I have forgotten the author; but that first line is worth a whole poem. You recollect, Madam, don't you? that

A was an archer, and he shot a frog;

[7] Fourth son of the Earl of Hertford. He died at Lyons 'of a decline' on Sept. 12, 1785, aged thirty-two.

[8] i.e. at Farming Woods, Lord Ossory's seat in Northamptonshire.

[9] The alphabet; so called from the figure of the cross being prefixed to it in hornbooks.

what think you of—

A was an archer[10]—and painted her face!

What a crop of new wits and new poets we have in our caducity? Old people, they say, admire nothing but what was flourishing in their youth; I am sure, in my youth, there was nothing like the present constellation. Once in a year or two, Pope, after many throes, was delivered of an Imitation of Horace, and Swift now and then sold you a bargain in short verses; for the rest of our time we lived upon Thomson's and Mallet's blank tragedies, and Lord Lyttelton's squirted-out ballads to Delia, no better than what are sung at Vauxhall. I hope this revival of wit is not lightning before death; nay, I do not recollect that other tottering empires threw out the brightest sparks at their extinction—*Speriamo!*

2551. To George Hardinge.

Dear Sir,

I have had a calf born, but it was ugly and from a *mésalliance.* But I have two more cows whose times are out, and you shall know as soon as they are delivered. When I received your note, I concluded it was to tell me of Lady Di's message. She told me she would ask you to-morrow evening; and she desired I would meet you. I shall not tell *you* what she said of you.

I have just seen the balloon too; and all the idea it gave me was one I have not had since I was at school—*football.*

My gout, thank you, is dormant; the rest, such rest as there is, gives me no trouble.

[10] Sarah, daughter of James West, the antiquary, and widow of Andrew Archer, second Baron Archer; d. 1801.

Letter 2551.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. viii. p. 529.

I send you a new Strawberry edition [1], which you will find extraordinary, not only as a most accurate translation, but as a piece of genuine French not metaphysicked by La Harpe, by Thomas, &c., and with versions even of Milton into *poetry*, though in the *French* language. The Duc [2] has had 100 copies, and I myself as many for presents: none will be sold, so their imaginary value will rise.

I have seen over and over again Mr. Barrett's [3] plans, and approve them exceedingly. The Gothic parts are classic; you must consider the whole as Gothic modernized in parts, not as what it is,—the reverse. Mr. Wyatt, if more employed in that style, will show as much taste and imagination as he does in Grecian. I shall visit *Lee* next summer.

I remain,
Yours ever,
H. Walpole.

2552. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1785.

You are too modest, Sir, in asking my advice on a point on which you could have no better guide than your own judgement. If I presume to give you my opinion, it is from zeal for your honour. I think it would be below you to make a regular answer to anonymous scribblers in a magazine: you had better wait to see whether any formal reply is made to your book, and whether by any avowed writer; to whom, if he writes sensibly and decently, you may condescend to make an answer.

Still, as you say you have been misquoted, I should not

[1] See the previous letter.
[2] The Duc de Nivernais.
[3] Thomas Barrett, of Lee Priory.

Letter 2552.—Incomplete in C.; now printed from Pinkerton's *Literary Correspondence*, vol. i. pp. 87-9.

wish you to be quite silent, though I should like better to have you turn such enemies into ridicule. A foe who misquotes you ought to be a welcome antagonist. He is so humble as to confess, when he censures what you have *not* said, that he cannot confute what you have said; and he is so kind as to furnish you with an opportunity of proving him a liar, as you may refer to your book to detect him.

This is what I would do; I would specify, in the same magazine in which he has attacked you, your real words, and those he has imputed to you; and then appeal to the equity of the reader: you may guess that the shaft comes from somebody whom you have censured; and thence you may draw a fair conclusion, that you had been in the right to laugh at one who was reduced to put his own words into your mouth before he could find fault with them; and, having so done, whatever indignation he has excited in the reader must recoil on himself, as the offensive passages will come out to have been his own, not yours. You might even begin with loudly condemning the words or thoughts imputed to you, as if you retracted them; and then, as if you turned to your book, and found that you had said no such thing there as what you was ready to retract, the ridicule would be doubled on your adversary.

Something of this kind is the most I would stoop to; but I would take the utmost care not to betray a grain of more anger than is implied in contempt and ridicule. Fools can only revenge themselves by provoking; for then they bring you to a level with themselves. The good sense of your work will support it; and there is scarce a reason for defending it, but, by keeping up a controversy, to make it more noticed; for the age is so idle and indifferent, that few objects strike, unless parties are formed for or against them. I remember many years ago advising some acquaintance of mine, who were engaged in the direction of the

Opera, to raise a competition between two of their singers, and have papers written pro and con.; for then numbers would go to clap and hiss the rivals respectively, who would not go to be pleased with the music.

Dr. Lort was chaplain to the late Archbishop, Sir, but I believe is not to the present; nor do I know whether at all connected with him: I do not even know where Dr. Lort is, having seen him but once the whole summer. I am acquainted with another person[1], who, I believe, has some interest with the present Archbishop; but I conclude that leave must be asked to consult the particular books, as, probably, indiscriminate access would not be granted.

I have not a single correspondent left at Paris. The Abbé Barthélémi, with whom I was very intimate, behaved most unhandsomely to me after Madame du Deffand's death, when I had acted by him in a manner that called for a very different return. He would have been the most proper person to apply to; but I cannot ask a favour of one, to whom I had done one, and who has been very ungrateful. I might have an opportunity perhaps, ere long, of making the inquiry you desire; though the person to whom I must apply is rather too great to employ; but if I can bring it about, I will; for I should have great pleasure to assist your pursuits, though, from my long acquaintance with the world, I am very diffident of making promises that are to be executed by others.

2553. To George Colman.

Sir, Strawberry Hill, Sept. 19, 1785.

I beg your acceptance of a little work just printed here; and I offer it as a token of my gratitude, not as pretending

[1] Lady Diana Beauclerc; the Archbishop (John Moore) had been tutor to her brothers, Lords Charles and Robert Spencer.

to pay you for your last present. A translation, however excellent, from a very inferior Horace[1], would be a most inadequate return; but there is so much merit in the enclosed version, the language is so pure, and the imitations of our poets so extraordinary, so much more faithful and harmonious than I thought the French tongue could achieve, that I flatter myself you will excuse my troubling you with an old performance of my own, when newly dressed by a master-hand. As, too, there are not a great many copies printed, and those only for presents, I have particular pleasure in making you one of the earliest compliments,

And am, Sir,

Your most obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2554. To the Earl of Buchan.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 23, 1785.

YOUR Lordship is too condescending when you incline to keep up a correspondence with one who can expect to maintain it but a short time, and whose intervals of health are resigned to idleness, not dedicated, as they have sometimes been, to literary pursuits; for what could I pursue with any prospect of accomplishment? or what avails it to store a memory that must lose faster than it acquires? Your Lordship's zeal for illuminating your country and countrymen is laudable, and you are young enough to make a progress; but a man who touches the verge of his sixty-eighth year ought to know that he is unfit to contribute to the amusement of more active minds. This consideration, my Lord, makes me much decline correspondence: having

LETTER 2553.—[1] The French translation of Horace Walpole's *Essay on Modern Gardening*; Colman had published two years before a translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*.

nothing new to communicate, I perceive that I fill my letters with apologies for having nothing to say.

If you can tap the secret stores of the Vatican, your Lordship will probably much enrich the treasury of letters. Rome may have preserved many valuable documents, as for ages intelligence from all parts of Europe centred there; but I conclude that they have hoarded little that might at any period lay open the share they had in most important transactions. History, indeed, is fortunate when even incidentally and collaterally it lights on authentic information.

Perhaps, my Lord, there is another repository, and nearer, which it would be worth while to endeavour to penetrate: I mean, the Scottish College at Paris. I have heard formerly, that numbers of papers, of various sorts, were transported at the Reformation to Spain and Portugal; but, if preserved there, they probably are not accessible *yet*. If they were, how puny, how diminutive, would all such discoveries, and others which we might call of far greater magnitude, be to those of Herschel, who puts up millions of coveys of worlds at a beat! My conception is not ample enough to take in even a sketch of his glimpses; and, lest I should lose myself in attempting to follow his investigations, I recall my mind home, and apply it to reflect on what we thought we knew, when we imagined we knew something (which we deemed a vast deal) pretty correctly. Segrais[1], I think, it was, who said with much contempt, to a lady who talked of her star, 'Your star! Madam, there are but two thousand stars in all; and do you imagine that you have a whole one to yourself[2]?' The foolish dame, it

LETTER 2554.—[1] Jean Regnault de Segrais (1624-1701), poet and *littérateur*.

[2] 'À propos d'étoiles, la Gouville était l'autre jour chez la Saint-Loup, qui a perdu son vieux page. La Gouville discouroit et parloit de son étoile; enfin que c'étoit son étoile qui avoit fait ceci, qui avait fait cela. Segrais se réveilla comme d'un som-

seems, was not more ignorant than Segrais himself. If our system includes twenty millions of worlds, the lady had as much right to pretend to a whole ticket as the philosopher had to treat her like a servant-maid who buys a chance for a day in a state lottery.

Stupendous as Mr. Herschel's investigations are, and admirable as are his talents, his expression of *our retired corner of the universe* seems a little improper. When a little emmet, standing on its ant-hill, could get a peep into infinity, how could he think he saw *a corner* in it?—a retired corner? Is there a bounded side to infinitude? If there are twenty millions of worlds, why not as many, and as many, and as many more? Oh, one's imagination cracks! I long to bait within distance of home, and rest at the moon. Mr. Herschel will content me if he can discover thirteen provinces[3] there, well inhabited by men and women, and protected by the law of nations; that law, which was enacted by Europe for its own emolument, to the prejudice of the other three parts of the globe, and which bestows the property of whole realms on the first person who happens to espy them, who can annex them to the crown of Great Britain, in lieu of those it has lost beyond the Atlantic.

I am very ignorant in astronomy, as ignorant as Segrais or the lady, and could wish to ask many questions; as, Whether our celestial globes must not be infinitely magnified? Our orreries, too, must not they be given to children, and new ones constructed, that will at least take in *our retired corner*, and all its outflying constellations? Must

meil, et lui dit: "Mais, Madame, pensez-vous avoir une étoile à vous toute seule? Je n'entends que des gens qui parlent de leur étoile! il semble qu'ils ne disent rien. Savez-vous bien qu'il n'y en a que mille vingt-deux? voyez s'il peut y en avoir pour tout le monde." Il dit cela si plaisamment et si sérieusement, que l'affliction en fut déconcertée.' (Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan, March 4, 1672.)

[3] The thirteen United States of America.

not that host of worlds be christened? Mr. Herschel himself has stood godfather for his Majesty to the new Sidus. His Majesty, thank God! has a numerous issue; but they and all the princes and princesses in Europe cannot supply appellations enough for twenty millions of new-born stars: no, though the royal progenies of Austria, Naples, and Spain, who have each two dozen saints for sponsors, should consent to split their bead-rolls of names among the foundlings. But I find I talk like an old nurse, and your Lordship at last will, I believe, be convinced that it is not worth your while to keep up a correspondence with a man in his dotage, merely because he has the honour of being, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient servant.

2555. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 30, 1785.

As soon, Sir, as I can see the lady, my friend, who is much acquainted with the Archbishop, I will try if she will ask his leave for you to see the books you mention in his library, of which I will give her the list. I did ask Mr. Cambridge where Dr. Lort is; he told me, with the Bishop of Chester, and on an intended tour to the Lakes.

I do not possess, nor ever looked into, one of the books you specify; nor Mabillon's[1] *Acta Sanctorum*, nor O'Flaherty's[2] *Ogygia*. My reading has been very idle, and trifling, and desultory; not that, perhaps, it has not been employed on authors as respectable as those you want to consult, nor that I had not rather read the Deeds of Sinners than *Acta Sanctorum*. I have no reverence but for sensible books, and consequently not for a great number; and had rather have

Letter 2555.—[1] Dom Jean Mabillon (1631–1707). [2] Roderick O'Flaherty (1629–1718). *Ogygia* is a history of Ireland.

read fewer than I have, than more. The rest may be useful on certain points, as they happen now to be to you; who, I am sure, would not read them for general use and pleasure, and are a very different kind of author. I shall like, I dare to say, anything you do write; but I am not overjoyed at your wading into the history of dark ages, unless you use it as a canvas to be embroidered with your own opinions, and episodes, and comparisons with more recent times. That is a most entertaining kind of writing. In general, I have seldom wasted time on the origin of nations, unless for an opportunity of smiling at the gravity of the author, or at the absurdity of the manners of those ages; for absurdity and bravery compose almost all the anecdotes we have of them, except the accounts of what they never did, nor thought of doing.

I have a real affection for Bishop Hoadley: he stands with me in lieu of what are called the Fathers; and I am much obliged to you for offering to lend me a book of his; but, as my faith in him and his doctrines has long been settled, I shall not return to such grave studies, when I have so little time left, and desire only to pass it tranquilly, and without thinking of what I can neither propagate nor correct. When youth made me sanguine, I hoped mankind might be set right. Now that I am very old, I sit down with this lazy maxim—that, unless one could cure men of being fools, it is to no purpose to cure them of any folly, as it is only making room for some other. Self-interest is thought to govern every man; yet, is it possible to be less governed by self-interest than men are in the aggregate? Do not thousands sacrifice even their lives for single men? Is not it an established rule in France, that every person in that kingdom should love every king they have, in his turn? What government is formed for general happiness? Where is not it thought heresy by the majority to insinuate that

the felicity of one man ought not to be preferred to that of millions? Had not I better, at sixty-eight, leave men to these preposterous notions, than return to Bishop Hoadley, and sigh? Not but I have a heart-felt satisfaction when I hear that a mind as liberal as his, and who has dared to utter sacred truths, meets with approbation and purchasers of his work. You must not, however, flatter yourself, Sir, that all your purchasers are admirers. Some will buy your book, because they have heard of opinions in it that offend them, and because they want to find matter in it for abusing you. Let them: the more it is discussed, the more strongly will your fame be established. I commend you for scorning any artifice to puff your book, but you must allow me to hope it will be attacked.

I have another satisfaction in the sale of your book: it will occasion a second edition. What if, as you do not approve of confuting misquoters, you simply printed a list of their false quotations, referring to the identical sentences, at the end of your second edition? That will be preserving their infamy, which else would perish where it was born; and perhaps would deter others from similar forgeries. If any rational opponent staggers you on any opinion of yours, I would retract it; and that would be a second triumph. I am, perhaps, too impertinent and forward with advice: it is at best a proof of zeal; and you are under no obligation to follow my counsel. It is the weakness of old age to be apt to give advice; but I will fairly arm you against myself, by confessing that, when I was young, I was not apt to take any.

2556. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 2, 1785.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for the notice of the pictures, but as I have no place left here for more pictures, and have a bust of Francis II and so good a copy of his Queen[1] from the original, I am not inclined to buy them unseen, and would not hinder the proprietor from selling them, if he can, by desiring him to keep them till I come to town, which may be in a week; but I cannot fix a day, as I am to have company with me this week, and do not know how long they will stay. Should they not be sold, I will let him know when I am in Berkeley Square, if he will bring them to me.

Sir Lionel Tollemache, who married the famous Countess of Dysart, afterwards Duchess of Lauderdale, was not, I believe, a Parliamentary general, nor, as far as I recollect, a general at all: but there was a former Sir Lionel in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, of whom Mr. Pennant might see a portrait in Scotland. I am, Sir,

Your much obliged, &c.,

Hor. Walpole.

2557. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 4, 1785.

I don't love to transgress my monthly regularity; yet, as you must prefer facts to words, why should I write when I have nothing to tell you? The newspapers themselves in a peaceable autumn coin wonders from Ireland, or live on the accidents of the equinox. They, the newspapers, have

Letter 2556.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. H. Yates Thompson.

[1] Mary Stuart, afterwards Queen of Scotland.

been in high spirits on the prospect of a campaign in Holland; but the Dutch, without pity for the gazetteers of Europe, are said to have submitted to the Emperor's terms: however, the intelligence-merchants may trust that *he* will not starve them long!

Your neighbour, the Queen of Sardinia, it seems, is dead: but, if there was anything to say about her, you must tell it to me, not I to you; for, till she died, I scarce knew she had been alive.

Our Parliament is put off till after Christmas; so, I have no more resource from domestic politics than from foreign wars. For my own particular, I desire neither. I live here in tranquillity and idleness, can content myself with trifles, and think the world is much the happier when it has nothing to talk of. Most people ask, 'Is there any news?'—How can one want to know one does not know what? when anything has happened, one hears it.

There is one subject on which I wish I had occasion to write; I think it long since I heard how you go on: I flatter myself, as I have no letter from you or your nephew, prosperously. I should prefer a letter from him, that you may not have the trouble; and I shall make this the shorter, as a precedent for his not thinking more than a line necessary. The post does not insist on a certain quantity; it is content with being paid for whatever it carries—nay, is a little unreasonable, as it doubles its price for a cover that contains nothing but a direction: and now it is the fashion to curtail the direction as much as possible. Formerly, a direction was an academy of compliments: 'To the most noble and my singularly respected friend,' &c., &c.—and then, 'Haste! haste, for your life, haste!'—Now, we have banished even the monosyllable *To*! Henry Conway[1], Lord Hertford's son,

LETTER 2557. — [1] Second son of Francis Seymour Conway, first Earl of Hertford. *Walpole.*

who is very indolent, and has much humour, introduced that abridgement. Writing to a Mr. Tighe at the Temple, he directed his letter only thus: 'T. Ti., Temple,'—and it was delivered! Dr. Bentley was mightily flattered on receiving a letter superscribed 'To Dr. Bentley in England.' Times are altered; postmen are now satisfied with a hint. One modern retrenchment is a blessing; one is not obliged to study for an ingenious conclusion, as if writing an epigram—oh no; nor to send compliments that never were delivered. I had a relation who always finished his letters with 'his love to all that was near and dear to us,' though he did not care a straw for me or any of his family. It was said of old Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, that she never put dots over her *i*'s, to save ink: how she would have enjoyed modern economy in that article! She would have died worth a thousand farthings more than she did—nay, she would have known exactly how many; as Sir Robert Brown[2] did, who calculated what he had saved by never having an orange or lemon lie on his sideboard. I am surprised that no economist has retrenched second courses, which always consist of the dearest articles, though seldom touched, as the hungry at least dine on the first. Mrs. Leneve[3], one summer at Houghton, counted thirty-six

[2] A noted miser, who raised a great fortune as a merchant at Venice, though his whole wealth when he went thither consisted in one of those vast wigs (a second-hand one, given to him) which were worn in the reign of Queen Anne, and which he sold for five guineas. He returned to England, very rich, in the reign of George II, with his wife and three daughters, who would have been great fortunes. The eldest, about eighteen, fell into a consumption, and, being ordered to ride, her father drew a map of the by-lanes about London, which he made the footman carry in his pocket and observe, that she might ride without paying a turnpike. When the poor girl was past recovery, Sir Robert sent for an undertaker, to cheapen her funeral, as she was not dead, and there was a possibility of her living. He went farther; he called his other daughters, and bade them curtsey to the undertaker, and promise to be his friends: and so they proved, for both died consumptive in two years! *Walpole.*

[3] A lady who lived with Sir Robert Walpole, to take care of his youngest daughter, Lady Maria, after her mother's death. After Sir Robert's death, and Lady Mary's marriage

turkey-pouts[4] that had been served up without being meddled with.

5th.

I had written thus far yesterday. This minute I receive your nephew's of Sept. 20th; it is not such an one by any means as I had wished for. He tells me you have had a return of your disorder—indeed, he consoles me with your recovery; but I cannot in a moment shake off the impression of a sudden alarm, though the cause was ceased, nor can a second agitation calm a first on such shattered nerves as mine. My fright is over, but I am not composed. I cannot begin a new letter, and therefore send what I had written. I will only add, what you may be sure I feel, ardent wishes for your perfect health, and grateful thanks to your nephew for his attention—he is rather your son; but indeed he is Gal's son, and that is the same thing. How I love him for his attendance on you! and how very kind he is in giving me accounts of you! I hope he will continue; and I ask it still more for your sake than for my own, that you may not think of writing yourself. If he says but these words, 'My uncle has had no return of his complaint,' I shall be satisfied—satisfied!—I shall be quite happy! Indeed, indeed, I ask no more.

2558. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 6, 1785.

I wondered I did not hear from you, as I concluded you returned. You have made me good amends by the entertaining story of your travels. If I were not too disjointed for long journeys, I should like to see much of what you

with Mr. Churchill, she lived with Mr. H. Walpole to her death. *Walpole.*

[4] As the sons of Rajahs in India are called Rajah-Pouts, and as turkeys came from the East, quaere if they were not called Turkey-pouts, as an Eastern diminutive? *Walpole.*

have seen; but if I had the agility of Vestris, I would not purchase all that pleasure for my eyes at the expense of my unsociability, which could not have borne the hospitality you experienced. It was always death to me, when I did travel England, to have lords and ladies receive me and show me their castles, instead of turning me over to their housekeeper: it hindered my seeing anything, and I was the whole time meditating my escape; but Lady Aylesbury and you are not such sensitive plants, nor shrink and close up if a stranger holds out a hand.

I don't wonder you was disappointed with Jarvis's windows at New College; I had foretold their miscarriage. The old and the new are as mismatched as an orange and a lemon, and destroy each other; nor is there room enough to retire back and see half of the new; and Sir Joshua's washy Virtues make the 'Nativity' a dark spot from the darkness of the shepherds, which happened, as I knew it would, from most of Jarvis's colours not being transparent.

I have not seen the improvements at Blenheim. I used to think it one of the ugliest places in England; a giant's castle, who had laid waste all the country round him. Everybody now allows the merit of Brown's achievements there.

Of all your survey I wish most to see Beaudesert[1]. Warwick Castle and Stowe I know by heart. The first I had rather possess than any seat upon earth: not that I think it the most beautiful of all, though charming, but because I am so intimate with all its proprietors for the last thousand years.

I have often and often studied the new plan of Stowe: it is pompous; but though the wings are altered, they are not lengthened. Though three parts of the edifices in the garden

LETTER 2558.—[1] Lord Paget's seat in Staffordshire.

are bad, they enrich that insipid country, and the vastness pleases me more than I can defend.

I rejoice that your jaunt has been serviceable to Lady Aylesbury. The *charming man*[2] is actually with me; but neither he nor I can keep our promise incontinently. He expects two sons[3] of his brother Sir William, whom he is to pack up and send to the Pères de l'Oratoire at Paris. I expect Lord and Lady Waldegrave to-morrow, who are to pass a few days with me; but both the charming man and I will be with you soon. I have no objection to a wintry visit: as I can neither ride nor walk, it is more comfortable when most of my time is passed within doors. If I continue perfectly well, as I am, I shall not settle in town till after Christmas: there will not be half a dozen persons there for whom I care a straw.

I know nothing at all. The peace between the Austrian harpy and the frogs is made. They were stout, and preferred being gobbled to parting with their money. At last, France offered to pay the money for them. The harpy blushed—for the first time—and would not take it; but signed the Peace, and will plunder somebody else.

Have you got Boswell's most absurd enormous book[4]? The best thing in it is a *bon mot* of Lord Pembroke[5]. The more one learns of Johnson, the more preposterous assemblage he appears of strong sense, of the lowest bigotry and prejudices, of pride, brutality, fretfulness, and vanity; and Boswell is the ape of most of his faults, without a grain of his sense. It is the story of a mountebank and his zany.

I forgot to say that I wonder how, with your turn, and

[2] Edward Jerningham, Esq. *Walpole.*

[3] George (afterwards Viscount Stafford) and William, sons of Sir William Jerningham, sixth Baronet, of Cossey, Norfolk.

[4] The *Tour to the Hebrides.*

[5] 'Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry, and some truth, that "Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary were it not for his *bow-wow way.*"' (*Tour to the Hebrides.*)

knowledge, and enterprise, in scientific exploits, you came not to visit the Duke of Bridgewater's operations[6]; or did you omit them, because I should not have understood a word you told me? Adieu!

2558*. To ———.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1785.

I return your books with a thousand thanks. They not only contain curious pieces, but are exactly to my taste: I can read almost any book, if it has but a comfortable quantity of proper names in it. I do not insist upon their great actions or profound wisdoms; I had rather see them in their *robes de chambre*, when neither they nor I are upon our good behaviours.

The second volume has a merit for which I have often declared I would read any book in the world through—that is, if it pays me with one superlative passage. Pray turn to page 74, in the account of the death of Louis Treize, when he receives the *saint viatique* with 'grosses larmes et des élévations d'esprit qui faisoient connoître évidemment un commerce d'amour entre leurs Majestés divines et humaines.' Don't you think that this true French *valet de chambre* would have been shocked if he could have supposed that God would not receive his Majesty at the top of the stairs and give him a *fauteuil à bras*? If you have any more such *patients*, I beg you will lend them to me. I had rather see them, and should learn more of human nature than if I knew all the policy exerted at the Treaty of Westphalia[1]!

Yours sincerely,

H. WALPOLE.

[6] The Duke was celebrated as a maker of canals, and as an owner of collieries, in which the workings were in many cases also connected by underground canals.

LETTER 2558*.—Not in C.; now first published by kind permission of Lord Mowbray and Stourton, from original in his possession at Allerton Park, Knaresborough.

[1] Concluded in 1648, at the end of the Thirty Years' War.

2559. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1785.

You are very gracious, Madam, in calling yourself in debt, when I was in yours too: but I have had the best or the worst reason in the world for not writing—the having nothing to say. I know nothing, do nothing, but write explanations of my house not being visible after the month of October. I have had an intercourse of letters with Sir Ralph Payne about some Poles who would have ridden into my hall, sabre in hand, as if it was the Diet of Grodno, and they a people still; but I suppose they considered that we are not!

Though these invasions, which keep me in hot water for five months, rankle in my mind, I would not torment your Ladyship with them if I had not occasion to beg your mediation. As this month of October is the only comfortable one I have (and I cannot reckon on many more), I am determined to keep it to myself, and have printed rules; nay, on the 1st, I unfurnish it as much as I can for an excuse for not showing it. To my sorrow Lady Lansdowne wrote to me after that day for a ticket for some of her acquaintance. Had it been for herself I should have begged the honour of showing it to her myself, a dispensation I reserve in my own breast for those I respect, as I most certainly do Lady Lansdowne. Unluckily I had but two days before refused a ticket to Marchioness Grey for herself, and did not offer to be my own housekeeper, as I owe no particular attentions to the house of Yorke. However, I could not personally affront a lady, as I should have done if I had obeyed Lady Lansdowne, and therefore trusted her Ladyship would excuse me, which I beg, Madam, you will repeat to her, and tell her my case and concern.

Now, Madam, do you wonder I do not *write*? Instead of

lamentations on Kirby, I can think of nothing but the groans of Strawberry: in verity, instead of *writing*, could time be recalled, I never would be an author. I am sick of my own trumpery, and if humility were not the mask of vanity, I would tell you why—but they would be all vain or selfish reasons—and so no matter what they are.

I condole with your Ladyship and Lady Ravensworth on the loss of the good General[1], and I am glad Lord Ossory tripped up the blacklegs.

I have had, and still have, a sad scene before my eyes; my poor honest servant, David, is dying of a dropsy, has been tapped twice, suffers dreadfully, wishes it over, and does not care for the trouble of another operation—so if Queens or Dukes of Wirtemberg come to see my house, nobody will send them away! What a wonderful contrast between poor David and Dubois, a *valet de chambre* of Louis Treize, who has given an account of that monarch's death, which has just been lent to me! After receiving the sacrament *avec de grosses larmes*, the slave adds, and 'des élévations d'esprit, qui faisoient connoître évidemment un commerce d'amour entre leurs Majestés divines et humaines.' I suppose the poor reptile expected that Louis would in heaven take place of the first prince of the blood! When human folly, or rather French folly, can go so far, it would be trifling to instance a much fainter silliness; but do you know, Madam, that the fashion now is, not to have portraits but of an *eye*? They say, 'Lord! don't you know it?' A Frenchman is come over to paint eyes here[2]!

LETTER 2559.—[1] General Cuthbert Ellison, who died on Oct. 10, 1785, aged ninety-one. He was a friend of Lady Ossory's parents.

[2] Cowper mentions this fashion in a letter to Newton of March 29, 1784. In his description of a visit from a Parliamentary candidate the poet says: 'He [Mr. Grenville] has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient, as it should seem, for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a riband from his buttonhole.'

I am not so partial as not to like the retort of Charles V. I would not advise Mr. Mason to go to court if Charles were living; nor will I go to Vienna. When General Johnstone returned a fortnight ago, I told him I hoped he had left everybody well in Germany but the Emperor. The postman stays—not that I can pretend to have a word more to say.

2560. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 30, 1785.

I am a contradiction, yet very naturally so; I wish you not to write yourself, and yet am delighted when I receive a letter in your own hand: however, I don't desire it should be of four pages, like this last of the 11th. When I have had the gout I have always written by proxy. You will make me ashamed if you don't use the precedent. Your account of yourself is quite to my satisfaction. I approve, too, of your not dining with your company. Since I must be old and have the gout, I have long turned those disadvantages to my own account, and plead them to the utmost when they will save me from doing anything I dislike. I am so lame, or have such a sudden pain, when I do not care to do what is proposed to me! Nobody can tell how rapidly the gout may be come, or be gone again; and then it is so pleasant to have had the benefit, and none of the anguish!

I did send you a line last week in the cover of a letter to Lady Craven, which I knew would sufficiently tell your quickness how much I shall be obliged to you for any attentions to her. I thought her at Paris, and was surprised to hear of her at Florence. She has, I fear, been *infinitamente* indiscreet; but what is that to you or me? She is very pretty, has parts, and is good-natured to the greatest degree; has not a grain of malice or mischief (almost always the

associates, in women, of tender hearts), and never has been an enemy but to herself. For that ridiculous woman Madame Piozzi [1], and t'other more impertinent one[2], of whom I never heard before, they are like the absurd English dames with whom we used to divert ourselves when I was at Florence. As to your little knot of poets, I do not hold the cocks higher than the hens; nor would I advise them to repatriate. We have at present here a most incomparable set, not exactly known by their names, but who, till the dead of summer, kept the town in a roar, and, I suppose, will revive by the meeting of Parliament. They have poured forth a torrent of odes, epigrams, and part of an imaginary epic poem, called *The Rolliad*, with a commentary and notes, that is as good as *The Dispensary* and *Dunciad*, with more ease. These poems are all anti-ministerial, and the authors[3] very young men, and little known or heard of before. I would send them, but you would want too many keys: and indeed I want some myself; for, as there are continually allusions to Parliamentary speeches and events, they are often obscure to me till I get them explained; and besides, I do not know several of the satirized heroes even by sight: however, the poetry and wit make amends, for they are superlative.

News I have none, wet or dry, to send you: politics are stagnated, and pleasure is not come to town. You may be sure I am glad that Cæsar is baffled; I neither honour nor esteem him. If he is preferring his nephew[4] to his brother, it is using the latter as ill as the rest of the world.

LETTER 2560. — [1] Widow of Mr. Thrale, on whose death she married an Italian fiddler, and was then at Florence with him. *Walpole.*

[2] Another English gentlewoman also there. *Walpole.*

[3] The principal were Mr. Ellis, Mr. Laurence, a lawyer, Col. R. Fitzpatrick, and John Townshend, second son of George, Viscount Townshend. *Walpole.*

[4] The Emperor was supposed to be endeavouring to get the eldest son of his brother the Great Duke elected King of the Romans. *Walpole.*

Mrs. Damer is again set out for the Continent to-day, to avoid the winter, which is already begun severely; we have had snow twice. Till last year, I never knew snow in October since I can remember; which is no short time. Mrs. Damer has taken with her her cousin Miss Campbell [5], daughter of poor Lady William, whom you knew, and who died last year. Miss Campbell has always lived with Lady Aylesbury, and is a very great favourite and a very sensible girl. I believe they will proceed to Italy, but it is not certain. If they come to Florence, the Great Duke should beg Mrs. Damer to give him something of her statuary; and it would be a greater curiosity than anything in his chamber of painters. She has executed several marvels since you saw her; and has lately carved two colossal heads for the bridge at Henley, which is the most beautiful one in the world, next to the Ponte di Trinità [6], and was principally designed by her father, General Conway. Lady Spencer [7] draws—incorrectly indeed, but has great expression. Italy probably will stimulate her, and improve her attention. You see we blossom in ruin! Poetry, painting, statuary, architecture, music, linger here,

on this sea-encircled coast (Gray),

as if they knew not whither to retreat farther for shelter, and would not trust to the despotic patronage of the Attilas [8], Alarics, Amalasuntas of the north! They leave such heroic scourges to be decorated by the Voltaires and D'Alemberts of the Gauls, or wait till by the improvement of balloons

[5] Caroline, second daughter of Lord William Campbell, fourth son of fourth Duke of Argyll. She died unmarried in 1789.

[6] At Florence. *Walpole.*

[7] Lavinia Bingham, daughter of Charles, Lord Lucan, and wife of John, second Earl Spencer, with whom she was then in Italy. *Walpole.*

[8] Frederic II, King of Prussia, Joseph II, Emperor of Germany, Catherine II, Empress of Russia, who had usurped and divided great part of Poland. *Walpole.*

they may be transported to some of those millions of worlds that Herschel is discovering every day; for this new Columbus has thrown open the great gates of astronomy, and neither Spanish inquisitors nor English nabobs will be able to torture and ransack the new regions and their inhabitants. Adieu!

2561. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1785.

By coming hither an hour ago, I am so fortunate as to be able to thank your Ladyship instantly for your most kind letter on Lady Euston's delivery. I am still more pleased with the very proper manner in which it was notified to you. Lady Horatia, who is with her sister, tells Miss Keppel that Lord Euston is delighted with his daughter[1]; it was for a daughter he wished; there certainly is no danger of the line of Fitzroy failing for want of an heir male.

I am in debt, Madam, for another letter which I received at Park Place, where I have been for some days; but Park Place furnished me with no more events than Strawberry Hill: and I must own that when I can tell nothing that will amuse, which seldom happens to me now, living as I do out of the world, and having outlived so many of my friends and acquaintance, I am shy of writing; for why should one write when one has little or nothing to say? I cannot *compose* letters like Pliny and Pope.

Your Ladyship's query I can answer by heart. Richard Duke of York, who was supposed murdered in the Tower, was, though an infant, married solemnly by his father, Edward IV, to Anne Mowbray, Duchess of Norfolk, and the heiress of that house, and still more a baby than himself. She died very soon; probably, though I could never find

Letter 2561.—[1] Lady Maria Anne Fitzroy, afterwards Lady Maria Anne Oglander.

exactly when [2], before the King, for it was in right of having married, or having been son of, her aunt (I forget which), that John Howard was created Duke of Norfolk by Richard III, and was the Jocky of Norfolk slain at Bosworth. You now see, Madam, why I know so much of the matter offhand.

I am come to town for two or three days on a little private business of my own, and to quit a horrid scene. My poor honest Swiss, David, has been dying of a dropsy for seven or eight months, and has suffered dreadfully. I have seen him but once since my return, as he has been speechless, and I flatter myself senseless, since last Saturday; but he groans shockingly; and though I trusted to hearing he was gone this morning, he was still alive, but motionless. I shall not go back to Strawberry till he is buried. As your Ladyship says Lady Ravensworth is in town, I shall endeavour to pay my duty to her. I am much pleased with the good old General's legacy; and don't wonder your Ladyship is so, though it will scarce purchase half an acre of a modern hat.

As the ashes of the Cecils are rekindling, perhaps a Phœnix may arise! I remember Lord Hervey saying that everything degenerated and dwindled, and instancing in the last Lord Salisbury [3], who he said was the cucumber of Burleigh. Well then, as matters, when they can go no lower, may mount again, who knows what may happen, Madam? Some melon-seeds, that have been neglected and not cultivated in the hothouse of a great family, may fall on good ground, and bring forth brave melons. Thus my father sprung from a grand-daughter of Lord Burleigh, and then dwindled to the gherkin—H. W.

[2] She appears to have died in 1481.
[3] James Cecil (1713–1780), sixth Earl of Salisbury.

2562. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Friday, 18th.

As I could mean *only* respect, Madam, on your Ladyship's telling me Lady Ravensworth was in town, I am glad you have prevented my troubling her with a visit, which I should have made this evening, and which, as I return to Strawberry to-morrow, will be as well made by the intention. My breeding *de vieille cour* makes me attend to certain ceremonials; but the slightest dispensation quiets the etiquette of my conscience, especially if it can give any kind of disturbance to anybody.

A marriage is agreed on between Mr. Pratt and Miss Molesworth[1]; but, as there is still a moment between the cup and *her* lip, it may not be recorded in fate's parish-register.

My poor servant died in a few hours after I left him. Mr. Morrice[2], I hear, is dead too, which must be as great a deliverance.

2563. To the Earl of Charlemont.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 23, 1785.

Nothing could honour me more than your Lordship's commands, nor make me happier than obeying them.

Letter 2562.—[1] Frances (d. 1829), daughter and heiress of William Molesworth, of Wenbury, Devonshire; m. (Dec. 31, 1785) Hon. John Jeffreys Pratt, afterwards Earl and Marquis Camden. Mrs. Powys (in her *Diaries*, p. 223) writes thus of the marriage of Mr. Pratt and Miss Molesworth: 'Everybody told us it would never take place, as three matches with noblemen had been broken off; but I've often heard the lady's reason for refusing each. I always thought our friend Pratt had a better chance than either of the trio. The first, she said, never entertain'd her with anything but politics, but a dry topic for courtship; the second made a horrid husband to his first wife; and the third had not sixpence in the world from his own extravagance. She was not wrong in refusing all three.'

[2] Humphrey Morice, sometime of Werrington, Devonshire.

Letter 2563.—Incomplete in C.;

Mr. Livesay[1] shall be welcome to make the transcripts you desire, with only a single reservation, which I am sure your Lordship will allow me to make when I tell you the cause of my making it, and add, that I believe my reserve will not deprive your Lordship of a copy, as I have heard that another proof has been found. In a word, my Lord, I have an emblematic print by Hogarth, of which no other was known. I have twice positively refused to let mine be copied—not from the narrow selfishness of a collector who envies others a similar possession; but I had a very particular reason for my refusal, which I would tell your Lordship if I had the honour of seeing you. As it is I should now give great offence if I granted what I absolutely denied before—and I am persuaded Lord Charlemont does not wish me to make personal enemies. I heard last winter that Mr. Gulston, I think it was, had discovered another proof. His collection is going to be sold, and I am told will employ forty days. If he had such a print it will most probably be copied, unless sold at an extravagant price, which I am sorry to say I have partly been the cause of his worst works bearing. The new edition of the tragedy[2], for which your Lordship is pleased to express a wish, shall be at your command as soon as I go to London, as I have not a copy here; but this edition has not the merit of the first impression—I mean, of being printed here, and of being a rarity. I was forced to make Dodsley print in haste a sufficient number for sale, to prevent a spurious edition that was advertised. My advertisement fortunately did stop the other impression, as I had hoped, and, having done so, I never published my own. Notes I believe there are none, but the references to two or

now printed from 13th Report of Hist. MSS. Comm., Appendix, part viii. vol. ii. pp. 29-30.

[1] Richard Livesay, portrait and landscape painter. He lodged with Mrs. Hogarth, and 'executed for her a series of facsimiles of drawings by Hogarth.' (*D. N. B.*)

[2] *The Mysterious Mother.*

three passages alluded to, and which were also in the first edition; but in the second I omitted the postscript, which contained a kind of apology for the offensiveness of the subject, and I thought it more decent and respectful to the public to plead guilty, than to attempt to defend what I knew was so faulty. If your Lordship will be so good as to let me know how I may convey the play, I will take the liberty of adding another piece, which, though in some measure mine too, will carry with it a full compensation; though I doubt that compensation will be proof of my own vanity. As your Lordship has given me this opportunity, I cannot resist saying, what I was exceedingly tempted to mention two or three years ago, but had not the confidence. In short, my Lord, when the Order of St. Patrick was instituted, I had a mind to hint to your Lordship that it was exactly the moment for seizing an occasion that has been irretrievably lost to this country. When I was at Paris I found in the convent of Les Grands Augustins three vast chambers filled with the portraits (and their names and titles beneath) of all the knights of the St. Esprit, from the foundation of the Order. Every new knight, with few exceptions, gives his own portrait on his creation. Of the Order of St. Patrick I think but one founder[3] is dead yet; and his picture perhaps may be retrieved. I will not make any apology to so good a patriot as your Lordship, for proposing a plan that tends to the honour of his country, which I will presume to call mine too, as it is both by *union* and by my affection for it. I should wish the name of the painter inscribed too, which would excite emulation in your artists. But it is unnecessary to dilate on the subject to your Lordship; who, as a patron of the arts, as well as a patriot, will improve on my imperfect thoughts, and, if you approve of them, can give them stability. I have the honour to be, my Lord, &c.

[3] Henry Loftus (1709–1783), third Earl of Ely.

2564. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 4, 1785.

You and I, my dear Sir, have long out-friendshipped Orestes and Pylades. Now I think we are like Castor and Pollux; when one rises, t'other sets; when you can write, I cannot. I have got a very sharp attack of the gout in my right hand, which escaped last year, but is paying its arrears now: however, I hope the assessment will not be general on all my limbs. Your being so well is a great collateral comfort to me. The behaviour of your nephew is charming and unparalleled: by the way, so is Mr. Croft's[1]; and, in a money-getting man, very extraordinary. I don't mean that I expect economy *for* another from a prodigal.

For the signora[2] who has been so absurd as to quarrel with your nephew, all I will say in a letter is that it is a kind of indiscretion I should not have expected from her. I will take no notice of knowing it; but I shall drop her correspondence, as I had done at Paris. You know I tried to serve her; but, alas, how often are you punished by my most harmless intentions! I wonder how our ministers abroad have patience with the extravagances of their compatriots: I have not, I am sure. Well! I will plant her there with a slight alteration of the two last lines[3] of *Paradise Lost*:—

> The world is all before her, where to choose
> Her place of rest, and—*Im*-providence her guide.

On your political rumours[4] I shall not descant, though they announce, on one side, an intention of opening a vast

Letter 2564.—[1] A banker. *Walpole.*

[2] An English lady mentioned in the preceding letter. *Walpole.*—See the letter to Mann of Oct. 30, 1785.

[3] The last lines but two.

[4] A report that the Empress of Russia was going to send a fleet against Constantinople, and that the Kings of France and Spain had enjoined the King of Naples to shut his ports against it. *Walpole.*

scene; and, on the other, a determination to embarrass it: but, as I recede from life, I look at distant objects through the diminishing end of a telescope, which reduces them to a point. On this side of our asterism I know nothing. My own chamber, and the next, contain my whole map; and two sides of a sheet of paper are volume enough for its history. Adieu!

2565. To the Earl of Charlemont.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 9, 1785.

Mr. Walpole has received the honour of Lord Charlemont's letter, but is quite incapable of answering it, being laid up by a severe attack of the gout in his whole right arm and hand. He sends the enclosed two books, of which he begs his Lordship's acceptance, to Mr. Malone, with whom he has the pleasure of being acquainted. The portraits of the knights of Saint Esprit, at Paris, are only heads on panel, which touch one another. The head of the Comte de Grammont, of which Mr. Walpole has a copy, is in armour. Perhaps the Grand Masters might be whole or half-lengths, in the dress of the Order, to show the habit, other knights in their own robes of peers, or in the dress of the times; but it ought to be an inviolable rule that no fantastic dresses should be allowed in a national and historic monument. If the whole present number would consent to sit at once, it might be worth the while of a good painter to go from London to paint them.

Letter 2565.—Not in C.; reprinted from 13th Report of Hist. MSS. Comm., Appendix, part viii. vol. ii. p. 30.

2566. To John Pinkerton.

Berkeley Square, Tuesday night.

I was very sorry, dear Sir, that you would not come up when you was so good as to call twice to-day. I give you many thanks for your books, which I am reading as fast as I can; but I cannot answer your queries, as I am not able to write myself, having the gout in my right hand, which brought me to town, and will, I conclude, keep me here a few days, and therefore I shall be very glad to see you if you go this way, though I beg you not to put yourself to any inconvenience, for I never heard anything of the story of Steele.

2567. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 13, 1785.

I have this minute received yours of the 25th of last month; and, though I cannot write with my own hand (which, however, is vastly better, and getting well), I must say a few words. You surely know me too well to suppose for a minute that anything could hurt you or your nephew in my affection or esteem; much less the ravings of such an *aventurière*. I have received two letters from her on the subject, and I can want no other evidence to condemn her. Her behaviour is little more than absurd, and her knight's interference *y met le comble*.

You may depend upon it, I shall totally drop the correspondence, but shall never own that I know a word of the matter; and I beg that you and your nephew will say that I never mentioned the affair to you, particularly not to the person [1] whom the dame acquainted that she had complained

Letter 2566.—Not in C.; printed from original in possession of Mrs. Alfred Morrison.

Letter 2567.—[1] An English lord, who happened to be then at Florence, and of whom Mr. Walpole had no favourable opinion. *Walpole.*

to me. I have reasons for what I say, which I cannot explain in a letter.

I am overjoyed to see your writing so firm, and to hear you again dine at table; but I beseech you not to abate any attention to your health. My surgeon (for I have been obliged to have one for my hand) has wanted me for these two days to go out and take the air; but I have positively refused, for I got two relapses last winter by venturing out too soon. I had rather be confined ten days more than are necessary, than recommence. I have great patience whenever the fit comes; but a relapse puts me into despair. I must finish, for your letter did not arrive till past seven; mine must go to the office by nine; and, about eight, people drop in to me: but I would not lose a minute before I answered yours.

2568. To Lady Browne.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 14, 1785.

I am extremely obliged to your Ladyship for your kind letter; and, though I cannot write myself, I can dictate a few lines. This has not been a regular fit of the gout, but a worse case: one of my fingers opened with a deposit of chalk, and brought on gout, and both together an inflammation and swelling almost up to my shoulder. In short, I was forced to have a surgeon, who has managed me so judiciously, that both the inflammation and swelling are gone; and nothing remains but the wound in my finger, which will heal as soon as all the chalk is discharged. My surgeon wishes me to take the air; but I am so afraid of a relapse, that I have not yet consented.

My poor old friend[1] is a great loss; but it did not much surprise me, and the manner comforts me. I had played

Letter 2568.—[1] Mrs. Clive, who died on Dec. 6, 1785, aged seventy-four.

at cards with her at Mrs. Gostling's[2] three nights before I came to town, and found her extremely confused, and not knowing what she did: indeed, I perceived something of the sort before, and had found her much broken this autumn. It seems, that the day after I saw her, she went to General Lister's burial and got cold, and had been ill for two or three days. On the Wednesday morning she rose to have her bed made; and while sitting on the bed, with her maid by her, sunk down at once, and died without a pang or a groan. Poor Mr. Raftor is struck to the greatest degree, and for some days would not see anybody. I sent for him to town to me; but he will not come till next week. Mrs. Prado has been so excessively humane as to insist on his coming to her house till his sister is buried, which is to be to-night.

The Duchess does not come till the 26th. Poor Miss Bunbury is dead; and Mrs. Boughton, I hear, is in a very bad way. Lord John Russell has sent the Duchess of Bedford word that he is on the point of marrying Lord Torrington's eldest daughter[3]; and they suppose the wedding is over. Your Ladyship, I am sure, will be pleased to hear that Lord Euston is gone to his father, who has written a letter with the highest approbation of Lady Euston. You will be diverted, too, Madam, to hear that *Hecate* has told Mrs. Keppel that she was sure that such virtue would be rewarded at last.

2569. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 8, 1786.

I think, my dear Sir, that you will be glad to hear that I am getting free from my parenthesis of gout, which,

[2] Whitton Place, Twickenham, formerly the seat of Archibald, third Duke of Argyll.

[3] Hon. Georgiana Elizabeth Byng, second daughter of fourth Viscount Torrington; m. (1786) Lord John Russell, afterwards sixth Duke of Bedford.

though I treat it as an interlude, has confined me above six weeks, and for a few days was very near being quite serious. It began by my middle finger of this hand, with which I am now writing, discharging a volley of chalk, which brought on gout and inflammation, and both together swelled my arm almost to my shoulder. In short, I was forced to have a surgeon. But last week my finger was delivered of a chalk-stone as big as a large pea, and now I trust the wound will soon heal; and in every other respect I am quite well, and propose taking the air in two or three days, if the weather grows dry: but for two days we have a deluge of rain, and solid fogs after ten days of snow, and a severer frost than any of last winter. I hope you are as well as I am, without having had so grave an *intermezzo*. However, I do not like your inundation of English peerages[1]; and I cannot enough applaud your two nephews for staying, and relieving you of so much of the load. I doubt you will have more fatigue, for I hear the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are going to Rome; and the other princely pair[2] are at Naples: but I hope you will not prefer etiquette to your regimen. I make it a rule, since I must be old and infirm, to plead age and ill-health against anything that is inconvenient. You will see two other English with pleasure, as they will give you no trouble,—Mrs. Damer, and her cousin Miss Campbell, daughter of poor Lady William, whom you knew. The latter has always lived with Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury, who are as fond of her as of their own daughter; and indeed she is a very amiable, sensible young woman. In truth, the exports from this country are incredible: France, Nice, Switzerland, swarm with us—and not all, as *you* have

LETTER 2569. — [1] The Duchess Dowager of Ancaster, Lord and Lady Spencer, Lord and Lady Bulkeley, were then just arrived, or were expected at Florence. *Walpole.*

[2] The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland. *Walpole.*

lately experienced, raise our credit. Gaming has *transported* half.

I ought to have thanked you sooner for your last, as it announced some kind china from you; but, besides the hindrance of my lame hand, I wished to say I had received it, for indeed I had nothing else to tell you. My confinement and the depopulation of London, which is still a desert, could produce but a very barren letter. I know nothing of the Continent but from our newspapers, the last intelligence in the world to be trusted. They are common shores of lies, scandal, abuse, and blunders. What must Europe think of us from our travellers, and from our own accounts of ourselves?—Oh, not much worse than we deserve! The mail from France was robbed last night in Pall Mall, at half an hour after eight—yes, in the great thoroughfare of London, and within call of the guard at the Palace. The chaise had stopped, the harness was cut, and the portmanteau was taken out of the chaise itself. A courier is gone to Paris for a copy of the dispatch. What think you of banditti in the heart of such a capital? yet at Dublin, I believe, the outrages are ten times more enormous. Methinks we are not much more civilized than the ages when the Marches of Wales and Scotland were theatres of rapine.

Miss Molesworth, whom you saw a few years ago with her aunt Lady Lucan, and her cousin Lady Spencer, is just married to Mr. Pratt, Lord Camden's son.

I think this is pretty well written for a hand that has still more chalk-stones on it than joints, and its middle finger wrapped up. In truth, I have suffered very little pain, nor lost an hour's sleep but for three nights. Confinement and debility in my limbs are grievances, no doubt, or I should not think the gout so violent an evil as it is reckoned; at least, in the quantity I have undergone in

thirty years the total of pain has not been very considerable. It has very seldom lowered my spirits; and, the moment the fever is gone, I can sleep without end, day and night. I am complimented on my patience—but what merit is there in patience, when one is not awake, or not in much pain, and not apt to be out of humour? *You* I have seen patient, and never out of humour, though in torture. In fact, if people of easy fortunes cannot bear illness with temper, what are the poor to do, who have none of our comforts and alleviations? The affluent, I fear, do not consider what a benefit-ticket has fallen to their lot out of millions not so fortunate; yet less do they reflect that chance, not merit, drew the prize out of the wheel.

9th.

I have seen a person from the Custom House, who tells me the *Lively* is not expected before February: when it arrives I will thank you again for the china.

2570. To Edmond Malone.

Mr. Walpole sends his compliments to Mr. Malone, and assures him he has looked for the source whence he mentioned a picture of Lord Roscommon by Carlo Maratti, but cannot find it. He concludes it was some note of Vertue; but at the distance of so many years cannot be sure. All Vertue's memorandums were indigested, and written down successively as he made them in forty volumes, often on loose scraps of paper, so it is next to impossible to find the note; nor, were it found, does it probably contain more than Mr. Walpole has copied into the *Anecdotes*.

Letter 2570.—Not in C.; reprinted from Prior's *Life of Malone*, p. 126.

2571. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 16, 1785 [1786].

I am always thanking you, Madam, I think, for kind inquiries after me; but it is not my fault that I am so often troublesome! I would it were otherwise!—however, I do not complain. I have attained another resurrection, and was so glad of my liberty, that I went out both Saturday and Sunday, though so snowy a day and so rainy a day never were invented. Yet I have not ventured to see Mrs. Jordan[1], nor to skate in Hyde Park. We had other guess winters in my time!—fine sunny mornings, with now and then a mild earthquake, just enough to wake one, and rock one to sleep again comfortably. My recoveries surprise me more than my fits; but I am quite persuaded now that I know exactly how I shall end: as I am a statue of chalk I shall crumble to powder, and then my inside will be blown away from my terrace, and hoary-headed Margaret will tell the people that come to see my house,—

One morn we miss'd him on the 'custom'd hill[2].

When that is the case, Madam, don't take the pains of inquiring more; as I shall leave no *body* to return to, even Cagliostro[3] would bring me back to no purpose. By the way, is not it curious, that when credulity and superstition are so far exploded, that even a Cardinal[4] is abandoned by bishops and clergy, and left to the civil power, there should still be dupes to such a mountebank as Cagliostro? I have

Letter 2571. — Hitherto placed amongst letters of 1785. (See *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 22, 1900.)

[1] Dora Bland (1762–1816), known as Mrs. Jordan. She first appeared in London on Oct. 18, 1785.

[2] Gray's *Elegy*.

[3] Giuseppe Balsamo (1745–1795), called Count Cagliostro, the famous quack and impostor.

[4] The Cardinal de Rohan, whose trial for complicity in the affair of the diamond necklace was to take place before the Parliament of Paris. He was one of Cagliostro's dupes.

been told that Prince Ferdinand himself had faith in him. I know that our late King, though not apt to believe more than his neighbours, had no doubt of the existence of vampires and their banquets on the dead. Dr. Johnson seems to have been the representative in epitome of all the contradictions in human nature.

Your Ladyship may be sure I am happy in Lady Euston's good fortune, not only in the Duke's being reconciled, but in obtaining Lady Ravensworth's favourable opinion. It has always been mine that her paternal understanding and temper would pierce at last through all clouds. She still in my eyes wants one essential boon from fortune to complete her felicity; and though I may not live to see that moment, I hope your Ladyship will then allow that I gave a just character of her, when I could have no idea of what has happened since.

Most of the diversions that I have given up cost me no regrets; but I own I should have enjoyed the play at Ampthill: indeed, you might have made me a little amends by sending me the prologue or epilogue, instead of a charade which I shall never guess. In revenge, here is one, which I hope you will all find as uncrackable: General Conway, who never rests till he has mastered one, miscarried: 'Ma première partie fait aller, ma seconde fait reculer, mon tout fait rire et pleurer.'

General Burgoyne's *Heiress,* I hear, succeeded extremely well, and was, besides, excellently acted. Have you had patience, Madam, to wade through Mr. Hayley's *Old Maids*? I could not; and can you guess why he wrote them, unless to sell *three* volumes? That sot Boswell is a classic in comparison.

You know, to be sure, Madam, that Lady Brudenel is dead; everybody laments her, for she was perfectly unexceptionable. I have lost a very old friend, one of my

oldest, and a most worthy man, Lord Dacre; but after forty years of miserable sufferings, his death was charming, and not two hours in duration from his seizure. We who are dead in equity, though not in law, should hope for such conclusions, and have former preludes discounted.

Sir William Hamilton, I am told, has been probing Vesuvius, and announces a more dreadful explosion than ever. Lord and Lady Spencer have ascended the mountain, while the lava boiled over the opposite brim. I should have no thirst for such bumpers.

My hand, you see, Madam, has obeyed you very debonnairly; I am sorry I had no better materials. I have straws enough, but I don't find that I have good brick.

P.S. I am not such a *blockhead* as I thought I was: I believe *that* is the key to your charade. My French one is as just.

2572. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Friday night, Jan. 27, 1786.

As the first part entertained your Lady and Lordships, it is but a sort of duty to send you the second. I received a little Italian note from Mrs. Cosway, this morning, to tell me that as I had last week met at her house an old acquaintance, without knowing her, I might meet her again this evening, *en connoissance de cause*, as Mademoiselle la Chevalière D'Éon, who, as Mrs. Cosway told me, had taken it ill that I had not reconnoitred her, and said she must be strangely altered—the devil is in it, if she is not!—but, alack, I have found her altered again; adieu to the abbatial dignity that I had fancied I discovered; I now found her loud, noisy, and vulgar; in truth, I believe she had dined a little *en dragon*. The night was hot, she had no muff or

gloves, and her hands and arms seem not to have participated of the change of sexes, but are fitter to carry a chair than a fan. I am comforted, too, about her accent. I asked Monsieur Barthélemy, the French Secretary, who was present, whether it was Parisian and good French: he assured me so far from it, that the first time he met her he had been surprised at its being so bad, and that her accent is strong Burgundian. You ask me, Madam, why she is here. She says, *pour ses petites affaires*; I take for granted for the same reason that Francis was here two years before he was known.

Nor was this all my entertainment this evening. As Mademoiselle Common of Two's reserve is a little subsided, there were other persons present, as three foreign ministers besides Barthélemy, Lord Carmarthen, Count Oginski, Wilkes and his daughter, and the chief of the Moravians. I could not help thinking how posterity would wish to have been in my situation, at once with three such historic personages as D'Éon, Wilkes, and Oginski, who had so great a share in the revolution of Poland, and was king of it for four-and-twenty hours. He is a noble figure, very like the Duke of Northumberland in the face, but stouter and better proportioned.

I remember many years ago making the same kind of reflection. I was standing at my window after dinner, in summer, in Arlington Street, and saw *Patty Blount* (after Pope's death), with nothing remaining of her immortal charms but her *blue eyes*, trudging on foot with her petticoats pinned up, for it rained, to visit *blameless Bethel*[1], who was sick at the end of the street.

LETTER 2572.—

[1] 'Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?
On air or sea new motions be imprest,
O blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?'
Moral Essays, Epistle v. ll. 123–6.

Early in the evening I had been, according to your Ladyship's leave, to wait on Lady Ravensworth. Her cough is very frequent, but it seems entirely from her throat, and not in the least from her breast.

After treating your Ladyship with some of the *dramatis personae* of modern story, I beg leave to enclose a Venus of the present hour in her *puris* non *naturalibus*. The drawing was made by a young lady at Bath, and was given to me by my sister. It diverted me so much that I gave it to Kirgate, with leave to have it engraved for his own benefit, and I should think he would sell hundreds of them.

Miss Hannah More, I see, has advertised her *Bas Bleus*, which I think you will like. I don't know what her *Florio* is. Mrs. *Frail* Piozzi's first volume of Johnsoniana is in the press, and will be published in February. There is published another kind of *Ana* called *Silva*, by a Dr. Heathcote [2], on which I advise your Ladyship not to throw away five shillings as I did—yet I could not read half a crown's worth; it is a heap of dull commonplace.

2573. To Miss Hannah More.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 9, 1786.

It is very cruel, my dear Madam, when you send me such charming lines [1], and say such kind and flattering things to me and of me, that I cannot even thank you with my own poor hand; and yet my hand is as much obliged to you as my eye, and ear, and understanding. My hand was in great pain when your present arrived. I opened it directly, and sat to reading, till your music and my own vanity

Hugh Bethell, of Rise, Yorkshire, was an intimate friend of Pope, who addressed to him the *Imitation of the Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace*.

[2] Ralph Heathcote, D.D. (1721–1795). *Sylva* was a collection of anecdotes and dissertations.

Letter 2573.—[1] The poem of *Florio*, dedicated to Mr. Walpole. *Walpole.*

composed a quieting draught that glided to the ends of my fingers, and lulled the throbs into the deliquium that attends opium when it does not put one absolutely to sleep. I don't believe that the deity who formerly practised both poetry and physic, when gods got their livelihood by more than one profession, ever gave a recipe in rhyme; and therefore, since Dr. Johnson has prohibited application to pagan divinities, and Mr. Burke has not struck medicine and poetry out of the list of sinecures, I wish you may get a patent for life for exercising both faculties. It would be a comfortable event for me: for, since I cannot wait on you to thank you, nor dare ask you

to call your doves yourself,

and visit me in your Parnassian quality, I might send for you as my *physicianess*. Yet why should not I ask you to come and see me? You are not such a prude as to

blush to show compassion,

though it should

not chance this year to be the fashion[2].

And I can tell you, that powerful as your poetry is, and old as I am, I believe a visit from you would do me as much good almost as your verses. In the meantime, I beg you to accept of an addition to your Strawberry editions; and believe me to be, with the greatest gratitude,

Your too much honoured,
And most obliged humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

[2] Vide *Florio Walpole.*

2574. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Friday night, Feb. 10, 1786.

As your Ladyship announced your speedy arrival in town; and as I suppose few read the second edition of a book after reading the first, I forbore to send you a second edition of my gout; yet I have had a black-letter one. My healed finger opened again, and for this week my surgeon has been picking chalk-stones out of both hands as if he were shelling peas. The gout returned, too, into my right hand and elbow, and swelled both. In short, since Wednesday was s'ennight, I have been prisoner a second time, and when my durance will end I do not guess.

When you do come, Madam, you will not hear much of Mr. Eden[1] or Mrs. Jordan, or of the *Heiress*, which, by the way, I went through twice in one day, and liked better than any comedy I have seen since the *Provoked Husband*; I like the prologue[2], too, very much; the epilogue is unworthy of both. Oh, but the hubbub you are to hear and to talk of, and except which, you are to hear and talk of nothing else, for they tell me the passengers in the streets, of all ranks, talk of it, is a subject[3] to which I suppose your letters have already attuned you, and on which I alone, for certain reasons, will say nothing; but if you don't guess, Madam, I will give you a clue: don't you remember that, after Louis Quatorze had married the Maintenon, and the Dauphin Mademoiselle Chouin[4], the

Letter 2574.—[1] Eden had suddenly left Fox and North, with whom he had hitherto acted, and had accepted a place in Pitt's ministry. His defection was the talk of the hour.

[2] By Hon. Richard Fitzpatrick.

[3] The report of the marriage of the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert. It took place on Dec. 21, 1785.

[4] Marie Émilie Joly de Choin, a member of a noble Savoyard family, who attracted the attention of the Dauphin when in the household of the Princesse de Conti. It was

Duchess of Burgundy[5] said to her husband, 'Si je venois à mourir, feriez-vous le troisième tome de votre famille?'— You may swear that my mysterious silence is not dated from any privity or knowledge: I do not know a tittle from any good authority; and though a mass of circumstances are cited and put together, they command no credit: whoever believes, must believe upon trust. The rest must be the work—or the explosion of time, though secrecy does not seem to be the measure most affected.

To divert the theme, how do you like, Madam, the following story? A young Madame de Choiseul is inloved with by Monsieur de Coigny and Prince Joseph of Monaco. She longed for a parrot that should be a miracle of eloquence: every other shop in Paris sells macaws, parrots, cockatoos, &c. No wonder one at least of the rivals soon found a Mr. Pitt, and the bird was immediately declared the nymph's first minister: but as she had two passions as well as two lovers, she was also enamoured of General Jackoo at Astley's. The unsuccessful candidate offered Astley ingots for his monkey, but Astley demanding a *terre* for life, the paladin was forced to desist, but fortunately heard of another miracle of parts of the Monomotapan race, who was not in so exalted a sphere of life, being only a *marmiton* in a kitchen, where he had learnt to pluck fowls with inimitable dexterity. This dear animal was not invaluable, was bought, and presented to Madame de Choiseul, who immediately made him the *secrétaire de ses commandemens.* Her caresses were distributed equally to the animals, and her thanks to the donors. The first time she went out, the two former were locked up in her bedchamber: how the two latter were disposed of, history is

generally supposed that Mlle. de Choin was married to the Dauphin. She died in 1744.

[5] Marie Adelaïde, daughter of Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy, and wife of Louis, Duke of Burgundy, grandson of Louis XIV and father of Louis XV.

silent. Ah! I dread to tell the sequel. When the lady returned and flew to her chamber, Jackoo the Second received her with all the *empressement possible*—but where was Poll? —found at last under the bed, shivering and cowering—and without a feather, as stark as any Christian. Poll's presenter concluded that his rival had given the monkey with that very view, challenged him, they fought, and both were wounded; and an heroic adventure it was!

I have not paper or breath to add more, Madam, but to thank you for inverting the story of Poll, and feathering my Venus. I hope I shall have occasion to send you no more letters; but that if I cannot wait on you, you will have charity enough to come and visit the chalk-pits in Berkeley Square.

2575. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 13, 1786.

If I was to talk of what has occupied most of my thoughts for these last three months, it would be of myself; but that is not a subject with which I ought to harass others, and therefore I shall be brief on it. A finger of each hand has been pouring out a hail of chalk-stones and liquid chalk; and the first finger, which I hoped exhausted, last week opened again and threw out a cascade of the latter, exactly with the effort of a pipe that bursts in the street: the gout followed, and has swelled both hand and arm; and this codicil will cost me at least three weeks. I must persuade myself, if I can, that these explosions will give me some repose; but there are too many chalk-eggs in the other fingers not to be hatched in succession.

I have had no occasion at least, my dear Sir, to double my lamentation on your account. Mrs. Damer and Miss Campbell have sent Lady Aylesbury the most pleasing

accounts of your health, and the warmest encomiums on your and your nephew's kindness to them. I must thrust myself into a share of the gratitude; for, with all their merit and your benevolence, I do not believe you forgot the pleasure you was giving me.

There are reports that the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are going to Rome, but we do not know it certainly. Our newspapers have been pleased twice lately to kill his Royal Highness; but, though they murder characters and reputations, they cannot take away lives; and indeed they themselves are so lost to all credit, that even the first notification made no impression.

Though the Parliament has been some time opened, it does not furnish a paragraph. There have been three or four times some angry speeches, but no long debate or division. The opposition seems very inactive, but promises some vivacity on Indian affairs. Mr. Eden's desertion has been the chief topic of politics, and on his subject the newspapers have been so profuse that I can make no additions to them.

Since I began this I have received yours of the 28th past; and, though your account of yourself is exceedingly welcome and pleasing, I am much grieved that your excellent nephews are leaving you: I am sure they cannot help it, for they have shown how much they prefer attending and saving you trouble. For trouble, I hope you will totally dispense with it: your age, indisposition, and fifty years of exertion of duties, benevolence, and attentions to all the world, demand and claim a quietus; and, if I have any weight with you, I enjoin your taking it out. If their RR. HH. of Gloucester pass through Florence, I do hope and beg that with all your public and private zeal you will not exert a strength you have not in doing honours; they, I am sure, will not expect it from you: and, when one's

own health is at stake, dignities are a joke. When I am ill, I look on royalties as I do when I see them on the stage, as pageants void of reality: what signifies whether they are composed of velvet and ermine, or of buckram and tinsel? If death opens one's eyes to the emptiness of glories here, sickness surely ought at least to open one eye. Your sweet nature does not think so roughly as mine, and therefore I prescribe stronger doses to you, which I hope self-preservation will persuade you to follow. Mr. Dutens[1] was here yesterday, and talked to me for an hour on all your good qualities; and charmed me by describing how the people of Florence, as you pass along the streets, show you to one another with fondness and respect.

I am obliged to you for your accounts of the house of *Albany*[2]; but that extinguishing family can make no sensation here when we have otherguess matter[3] to talk of in a higher and more flourishing race: and yet were rumour—ay, much more than rumour, every voice in England—to be credited, the matter, somehow or other, reaches even from London to Rome. I know nothing but the buzz of the day, nor can say more upon it: if I send you a riddle, fame, or echo from so many voices, will soon reach you and explain the enigma; though I hope it is essentially void of truth, and that appearances rise from a much more common cause.

The swelling of my hand is much abated since I began to dictate this yesterday. The day has been so vernal that

LETTER 2575. — [1] A French Protestant clergyman, who had been employed in the embassy at Turin under Mr. Mackenzie and Lord Mountstuart, and author of several works. *Walpole.* — The Rev. Louis Dutens (1730–1812) was a Frenchman who took orders in the Church of England in 1760. He held the living of Elsdon in Northumberland, but never performed clerical duty. Besides an edition of the Works of Leibnitz he published an account of his own life and adventures under the title of *Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose.*

[2] The Pretender's family. *Walpole.*

[3] The connection of the Prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert. *Walpole.*

my surgeon would have persuaded me to take the air; but I am such a coward about relapses that I would not venture. Adieu!

2576. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 16, 1786.

Your short letter on losing your two amiable nephews gave me great pain for you, my dear Sir. As Sir Horace generally hires *post winds*, I expected him the next day: but, as the snow had engaged the whole stable of east winds for this last month, he is not arrived yet, nor Ginori's china neither, which ought to have been here in February; and which disappointment contributed to delay my thanks, though I can say already that

Tuis *nunc omnia plena*
Muneribus.

Two additional causes have concurred in my silence: I had nothing new to tell you; and, till within these ten days, my poor lame and cold hands could not move a pen. Our second winter has been bitter; and, though my chalk-mines were exhausted for the present, I did not dare to stir out, nor have yet been abroad in a morning but three times;—and yesterday we had a new codicil of snow. Our great roads, spacious and level as they are, are almost impassable.

London has been very calm, both politically and fashionably. Mr. Pitt lost a question, by the Speaker's vote only, on a large plan of fortifications which the minister had adopted to please the Duke of Richmond. Most other debates roll on the affair of Mr. Hastings, who is black-washed by the opposition, and is to be white-washed by the House of Commons. I do not know who is guilty or innocent; but I have no doubt but India has been blood-washed by our countrymen!

The present subject of the day comes from a country where there reigns as little equity, and more avowed barbarism, than in India! The hero is a Mr. Fitzgerald[1], grandson of Lord Hervey, and consequently nephew of his Eminence *the Episcopal Earl of Bristol*—nor is the nepotism unworthy of the uncle. England, as well as Ireland, has long rung with Fitzgerald's exploits, who has just committed murders that would be almost unparalleled, if a few years ago he had not attempted the life of his own father, who was defended by another son—and yet neither father nor brother were much better than the assassin. The particulars of the present tragedy are too long for a letter, and unnecessary, as they are all in the newspapers. By this time Fitzgerald is hanged, or *rescued*, or dead of his wounds; for the friends of the murdered broke into the prison, and gave Fitzgerald many wounds, but did not dispatch him, as he has long worn a waistcoat lined with elastic gum, which had *very honourably* saved his life formerly, when shot in a duel. This savage story is a little relieved by Cagliostro's Memorial[2], and by the exhibition of Mademoiselle la Chevalière D'Éon, who is come over. I trouble myself little to inquire into either of their histories—one shall never know the real truth of either; and what avails it to scrutinize what is unfathomable? What signifies exploring when at last one's curiosity may rest on error?

I have a pleasanter theme for my own satisfaction:

LETTER 2576. — [1] George Robert Fitzgerald, son of George Fitzgerald by Lady Mary Hervey, daughter of John Hervey, first Baron Hervey of Ickworth. Fitzgerald was tried in June 1786 for the murder of one M'Donnell and was found guilty. He was hanged at Castlebar on June 12, 1786. He is probably identical with the Fitzgerald mentioned in the letter of March 10, 1766, addressed to Lady Hervey (his grandmother), and in that to Mason of April 3, 1775.

[2] *Mémoire pour le Comte de Cagliostro, en présence des autres Co-accusés*, published by Cagliostro during his imprisonment in the Bastille for complicity in the affair of the diamond necklace.

Captain Hugh Conway, a younger son of Lord Hertford, is going to marry Lady Horatia Waldegrave[3]. He is one of the first marine characters, and has every quality that would adorn any profession; but the striking resemblance between the lovers are good nature and beauty. Lord Hertford is as much charmed with the match as I am; and we flatter ourselves the Duchess, to whom a courier is gone, and for whose consent they wait, will approve of it too, though it will not be an opulent alliance. Their RR. HH. are at Milan.

Lord and Lady Spencer are arrived—and now I suppose the adventures of a certain lady[4] and *her Cousin Vernon*[5], which I have kept profoundly secret, will be public. I have lately received a letter from *the lady* from *Petersburg*: luckily she gave me no direction to her, no more than from *Venice*; so, if necessary, I shall plead that I did not know whether I must direct next to Grand Cairo, or Constantinople. Petersburg I think a very congenial asylum; the sovereign has already fostered the *Ducal Countess of Bristol*—for in the family of Hervey double dignities couple with facility. Formerly our outlaws used to concentre at Boulogne; they are now spread over the face of the earth. *Mr. Vernon's cousin* tells me she has been also at Warsaw; that she showed the King a letter of mine, who put it into his pocket, translated it into French (though returning the original), and would send it to his sister the Princess Czartoriski at Vienna:—so, I may see it in an Utrecht *Gazette*! I know not what it contained; however, I comfort myself that I have never dealt with my heroine but in

[3] Third daughter of the Duchess of Gloucester by her first husband, James, Earl of Waldegrave. Lady Horatia and Captain Conway were second cousins, once removed. *Walpole.*

[4] Elizabeth Berkeley, Lady Craven, sister of the Earl of Berkeley. *Walpole.*

[5] Henry Vernon the younger, of Hilton, Staffordshire; the reason for his being called Lady Craven's cousin does not appear.



James Boswell
from a drawing by G. Dance.

compliments or good advice: but this comes of corresponding with strolling Roxanas.

I have very lately been lent a volume of poems, composed and printed at Florence, in which another of our ex-heroines, Mrs. Piozzi[6], has a considerable share: her associates, three of the English bards who assisted in the little garland which Ramsay the painter sent me. The present is a plump octavo; and, if you have not sent me a copy by your nephew, I should be glad if you could get one for me: not for the merit of the verses, which are moderate enough, and faint imitations of our good poets; but for a short and sensible and genteel preface by la Piozza, from whom I have just seen a very clever letter to Mrs. Montagu, to disavow a jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell, by anecdotes of Dr. Johnson. In a day or two we expect another collection by the same signora.

Though I ask for that volume, it made me very indignant. Though that constellation of *ignes fatui* have flattered one another as if they were real stars, I turned over the whole set of verses (though I did not read a quarter), and could not find the only name I expected to see—yours. What stocks and stones!—more insensible than their predecessors, who danced to Orpheus!—who lived under the shade of your virtues, and could drink of the stream of your humanity, benevolence, and attentions, and not attempt to pay one line to gratitude. If you send me the book I think I will burn all but the preface.

I hope the spring will recruit your spirits, though it cannot replace your nephews! I am very impatient for their arrival. My own gout is gone, the chalk suspended for the present, and except being six months older than Methusalem in point of strength, I am as well as I ever am.

[6] Widow of Mr. Thrale, a great brewer, remarried to Piozzi, an Italian fiddler. She had broken with Sir Horace, because he could not invite her husband with the Italian nobility. *Walpole.*

17th.

Your nephews are arrived; I have seen Sir Horace, he will write to you to-night himself. Adieu!

2577. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 28, 1786.

This is but a codicil to my letter of last week, and only to tell you that the *Lively* is arrived, and that I have received the vases and books; and, by the courier, your letter of the 10th. The form of the vases is handsome; the porcelain and the gilding inferior to ours, and both to those of France; as the *paste* of ours at Bristol, Worcester, and Derby is superior to all but that of Saxony. The French excel us all in ornaments of taste—I mean, in such ornaments as do not rise to serious magnificence; but they must keep within doors: they may deck dress, furniture, china, and snuff-boxes; but buildings, cities, gardens, will not allow of spangles.

You have not told me whether the vases are of Ginori's or the Great Duke's manufacture; I imagine, of the former: but I shall ask your nephew when he returns to London. I thank you, too, for the volume of poems by the *Quadruple Alliance*, which, in my last, I have begged you to send me; a wish you had anticipated. In the case there were also four copies of the Panegyric on Captain Cook,—did you mean any of the copies for any particular persons?—and the poem on Lord Robert Manners. Once more, thanks for all!

Two days ago appeared Madame Piozzi's *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson*. I am lamentably disappointed—in her, I mean; not in him. I had conceived a favourable opinion of her capacity. But this new book is wretched; a high-varnished preface to a heap of rubbish, in a very vulgar style, and too void of method even for such a farrago. Her panegyric is

loud in praise of her hero; and almost every fact she relates disgraces him. She allows and proves he was arrogant, yet affirms he was not proud; as if arrogance were not the flower of pride. A man may be proud, and may conceal it; if he is arrogant, he declares he is proud. She, and all Johnson's disciples, seem to have taken his brutal contradictions for *bons mots*. Some of his own works show that he had, at times, strong, excellent sense; and that he had the virtue of charity to a high degree is indubitable: but his friends (of whom he made woful choice) have taken care to let the world know that in behaviour he was an ill-natured bear, and in opinions as senseless a bigot as an old washerwoman—a brave composition for a philosopher! Let me turn from such a Hottentot to his reverse—to *you*; to you, the mild, benevolent, beneficent friend of mankind, and the true contented philosopher in every stage. Your last resigned letter is an antidote to all Johnson's coarse, meditated, offensive apophthegms.

As spring must be arrived in Italy, though postponed again here by snow, frosts, and east winds, I trust your cough will be softened, if not removed. I scarce can bring myself to hope it quite cured. My long observation has persuaded me that a cough, though a vexatious remedy, is a preservative of elderly persons, from exercising and clearing the breast and lungs. I know two or three who for years have had a constant cough in winter, and who have dangerous illnesses if it does not return in its season.

Thank you for the Leyden *Gazette*; the theme[1] is still very rife, but with no new event, though contradictory reports are coined every day. I do not repeat them, for I know not which are true, nor whether any are.

I interest myself much more in the slight shown to your

LETTER 2577.—[1] Connection of the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert. *Walpole.*

nephew: it surprised me, for I thought that *he* at least was acceptable. Your nephew's delicacy was silent to me; and so must I be by the post.

I have at last been paid my fortune by *my* nephew[2]—just forty years after my father's death! The only surviving son of that *Grand Corrupter*, who plundered England, has, after forty years, received four thousand pounds; which, with three thousand more, is all I have *ever* had from my father's family!—yet calumny will not blush, but repeat the lie! My nephew, or Lucas, have acted like themselves, and have jockeyed me out of six hundred pounds by a *finesse* in the bond, by dating it three years later than it should have been, and which my negligence had overlooked; and, therefore, I may blame myself. Lucas, who extorted from Mozzi interest upon interest against my opinion, took care not to offer it to me, though the case similar, except that mine would have been much less; and you may be sure I would not ask for what I would not have accepted, as I disapprove such extortion, and should be sorry to resemble them. The purport, too, of the bond was curious. Lucas did not know that my eldest brother had paid me one thousand pounds of my fortune, and drew the bond for five thousand. I would not accept it, but made him draw it for four thousand. I will do him the justice to acknowledge that he said, 'Oh, my Lord would pay me the whole.' I replied, 'I would *not* be paid twice; I knew, if *they* did not, that I had received one thousand': and so, because I would not accept of what was not due to me, they curtailed the interest that ought to be my due! Well! I have done with them, and so shall you of hearing of them.

29th.

I have effaced two lines that I had written, because upon recollection I can account better for what happened. There

[2] The Earl of Orford.

is a gentlewoman [3] in the world who, a very few years ago, tried to captivate your nephew. She has had better success, I believe, lately, in another place, though less to her honour. I ascribe to her the coldness; and dare to say that a third person [4] did not know anything of the matter. I imagine you will have this mystery explained, like another.

Signora Piozzi's book is not likely to gratify her expectation of renown. There is a Dr. Wolcot [5], a burlesque bard, who had ridiculed highly, and most deservedly, another of Johnson's biographic zanies, one Boswell; he has already advertised an eclogue between Bozzi and Piozzi, to be published next week; and, indeed, there is ample matter. The signora talks of her Doctor's *expanded* mind, and has contributed her mite to show that never mind was narrower. In fact, the poor man is to be pitied: he was mad, and his disciples did not find it out, but have unveiled all his defects; nay, have exhibited all his brutalities as wit, and his lowest conundrums as humour. Judge!—The Piozzi relates that a young man asking him where Palmyra was, he replied, 'In Ireland; it was a bog planted with palm-trees!' I am now rejoiced, and do not wonder that you was not thought worthy to be mentioned by such a panegyrist! But what will posterity think of us when it reads what an idol we adored?

2578. To Thomas Walpole the Younger.

Strawberry Hill, April 8, 1786.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for your congratulation on Lady Horatia's marriage. It makes me very happy

[3] Lady Almeria Carpenter, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Duchess of Gloucester, and mistress of the Duke. *Walpole.*—She was daughter of the first Earl of Tyrconnel, and died in 1809.

[4] The Duchess, who did not know of Sir H. Mann, jun., being at Genoa, where the Duke would not see him. *Walpole.*

[5] Dr. John Wolcot (1738–1819), who wrote under the name of 'Peter Pindar.'

Letter 2578.—Not in C.; reprinted

indeed, as she has found one of the most amiable men in England, and of a character the most universally esteemed. This wedding, and consequential visits, have taken me up a good deal for the last three weeks; before which time I was not able to answer your former letter. For three months I had not the use of either hand, and, though I had one very short interval, I soon relapsed, and was again confined to my house. I could not much lament my confinement, for the winter has been insufferably bad; and, if it is gone, no symptoms of spring are come in its room. I would say less of gout and weather if I had anything more amusing to tell you. I believe the letters of your sisters do not overflow with events. We have even been forced to live on the rebound of stories of the Cardinal de Rohan, Cagliostro, with some interludes furnished by Dr. Johnson's friends, who out of zeal have exposed the poor man, by relating all his absurdities and brutalities, more than they had blown up the bladder of his fame before.

I lost my old friend, and your late acquaintance, Lord Dacre [1], in January. He made a most reasonable will; and Lady Dacre has deserved it by her kindness to his children, who both live with her.

The catalogue of the Duchess of Portland's collection is come out. The auction begins on the 24th. Out of thirty-eight days there are but eight that exhibit anything but shells, ores, fossils, birds' eggs, and natural history. And in the eight days there are hundreds of old-fashioned snuff-boxes that were her mother's [2], who wore three different every week; and they probably will sell for little more than the weight of the gold. I once asked the Duchess to let me see them; and, after two

from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 90–5.

[1] Thomas Barrett-Lennard, seventeenth Baron Dacre of the South. He left no legitimate children. His natural son, Thomas Barrett-Lennard, inherited his father's estate of Belhouse, near Aveley, in Essex, and was created a baronet in 1801.

[2] Henrietta Cavendish-Holles, Countess of Oxford.

drawersful, I begged to see no more; they were so ugly. Madame de Luxembourg has as many, but much finer and [more] beautiful. The Hamilton vase is in the last day's sale. It will not, I conclude, produce half of what it cost the Duchess unless it is sent for to the Houghton collection in the north. The *vendor* of the latter has been giving extravagant prices for Cipriani's trumpery drawings, who is dead: and the *purchaser* has bespoken a large picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. He was to choose the subject, size, and price. He told me he had pitched on the Infant Hercules and the serpents. 'Lord!' said I, 'people will say she is strangling the two Emperors.'

Monsr. Adhémar is returned to us, and Mlle. D'Éon has been here all the winter, and much in request. I have met her twice, but would not visit her out of regard to Madame de Guerchy. The Duc de Nivernois has made an incomparable translation of my history of Modern Gardening, as I suppose your sisters, to whom I gave one, have told you. My Strawberry editions, merely from their scarcity, sell ridiculously dear. I was forced to pay thirteen guineas yesterday for the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* in quarto for the King of Poland, who had sent to me for them, and I had not a spare copy left. It is hard to pay almost treble the value for my own impressions! If collectors are fools, it is a comfort, at least, that the works of great authors are common and cheap.

Lady Di has painted a new room at her cottage, since you saw it, with small pictures of peasants and children, in rounds and squares, that are chained together by wreaths of natural flowers that exceed her lilies, and all flowers that ever were painted. What pity that they are in water colours, and consequently almost as perishable as their originals. Van Huysum's[3] finical and elaborate works will pass for

[3] Jan van Huysum (1682-1749), fruit and flower painter.

standards, because Lady Di's bold characteristic touches will not exist! They are like the excellence of a great actor or musician, whose perfections live only in tradition, and cannot be compared with the merit of prior or subsequent performers. If the Apollo Belvedere were not extant, who would believe that it has never been equalled?

I am sorry your residence is so unentertaining, but I rejoice that all around you is so tranquil. I hate the authors of big news, who precipitate the bills of mortality and rival a pestilence. It is better to be occupied about a D'Éon or a Cagliostro than about a hero.

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

2579. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, April 30, 1786.

The almanac tells me that I ought to write to you; but then it ought to tell me what to say. I know nothing: people have been out of town for Easter, or rather for Newmarket; for our diversions mark the seasons, instead of their proclaiming themselves. We have no more spring than we had last year. I believe the milkmaids to-morrow will be forced to dress their garlands with Christmas nosegays of holly and ivy, for want of flowers.

The tragedy, or rather, I suppose, the farce, of Mr. Hastings's trial is also to commence to-morrow, when he is to make his defence before the House of Commons; where the majority of his judges are *ready* to be astonished at his eloquence, and the transparency of his innocence, and the lustre of his merit. In the meantime, the charges are enormous, and make numbers, who are not to be his jury, marvel how he will clear himself of half; and, if he does, what he will do with the remainder. I have not yet looked into the charge, which fills a thick octavo. My opinion is formed more summarily:

innocence does not pave its way with diamonds, nor has a quarry of them on his estate.

All conversation turns on a trio of culprits—Hastings, Fitzgerald, and the Cardinal of Rohan. I have heard so much of all lately, that I confound them, and am not sure whether it was not the first who pretended to buy a brilliant necklace for the *Queen*, or who committed murders in Ireland, not in India; or whether it was not Fitzgerald who did not deal with Cagliostro for the secret of raising the dead, as he may have occasion for it soon. So much for tragedy! Our comic performers are Boswell and Dame Piozzi. The cock-biographer has fixed a direct lie on the hen, by an advertisement in which he affirms that he communicated his manuscript to Madame Thrale, and that she made no objection to what he says of her low opinion of Mrs. Montagu's book. It is very possible that it might not be her real opinion, but was uttered in compliment to Johnson, or for fear he should spit in her face if she disagreed with him; but how will she get over her not objecting to the passage remaining? She must have known, by knowing Boswell, and by having a similar intention herself, that his anecdotes would certainly be published;—in short, the ridiculous woman will be strangely disappointed. As she must have heard that the whole first impression of her book was sold the first day, no doubt she expects, on her landing, to be received like the Governor of Gibraltar, and to find the road strewed with branches of palm. Alack, she will discover that, though she has ridden an ass, she will be welcomed with no hosannas. She, and Boswell, and their hero, are the joke of the public. A Dr. Wolcot, *soi-disant* Peter Pindar, has published a burlesque eclogue, in which Boswell and the signora are the interlocutors, and all the absurdest passages in the works of both are ridiculed. The print-shops teem with satiric prints on them: one, in which Boswell, as

a monkey, is riding on Johnson, the bear, has this witty inscription, 'My friend *delineavit.*'—But enough of these mountebanks!

The Duchess of Gloucester tells me that Lord Cowper is at Milan, on his way to England; yet, I shall not wonder if he still turns back. I remember Lady Orford came even to Calais, and returned *sur ses pas.*

May 4th.

I must send my letter to the office to-night, for I go to Strawberry to-morrow for two or three days—not that we have spring or summer yet. I believe both seasons have perceived that nobody goes out of town till July, and that therefore it is not worth while to come over so early as they used to do. The sun might save himself the same trouble, and has no occasion to rise before ten at night; for all nature ought, no doubt, to take the *ton* from people of fashion, unless nature is willing to indulge them in the opportunity of contradicting her! Indeed, at present, our fine ladies seem to copy her—at least, the ancient symbols of her; for, though they do not exhibit a profusion of naked bubbies down to their shoe-buckles, yet they protrude a prominence of gauze that would cover all the dugs of Alma Mater. Don't, however, imagine that I am disposed to be a censor of modes, as most old folks are, who seem to think that they came into the world at the critical moment when everything was in perfection, and ought to suffer no farther innovation. On the contrary, I always maintain that the ordinances of the young are right. Who ought to invent fashions? Surely not the ancient. I tell my veteran cotemporaries that, if they will have patience for three months, the reigning evil, whatever it is, will be cured; whereas, if they fret till things are just as they should be, they may vex themselves to the day of doom. I carry this way of thinking still farther, and extend it to almost all reformations. Could one cure the

world of being foolish, it were something; but to cure it of any one folly is only making room for some other, which, one is sure, will succeed to the vacant place.

Mr. Hastings used two days in his defence, which was not thought a very modest one, and rested rather on Machiavel's code than on that of rigid moralists. The House is now hearing evidence; and as his counsel, Mr. Machiavel, will not challenge many of the jury, I suppose Mr. Hastings will be honourably acquitted. In fact, who but Machiavel can pretend that we have a shadow of title to a foot of land in India; unless, as our law deems that what is done extra-parochially is deemed to have happened in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, India must in course belong to the crown of Great Britain? Alexander distrained the goods and chattels of Porus upon a similar plea; and the popes thought all the world belonged to them, as heirs-at-law to One who had not an acre upon earth. We condemned and attainted the popes without trial, which was not in fashion in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and, by the law of forfeiture, confiscated all their injustice to our own use; and thus, till we shall be ejected, have we a right to exercise all the tyranny and rapine that ever was practised by any of our predecessors anywhere,—as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

2580. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, May 29, 1786.

I HAVE been very unhappy at your debility, that expressed itself in your last letter—I do not say, that you complained of; for a murmur cannot possibly escape from one who never feels impatience, and whose temper infuses that philosophy which even your good sense could not alone confer. I was made easier last night by Lord Cowper, who

had just received a very comfortable letter from you; and, now that my alarm is dissipated, my reason can recover its tone, and tells me that weakness is not danger—and might not my own experience have told me so? A puff of wind could blow me away; and yet here I am still, and have stood many a rough blast. I depend on the sun of Florence, and on the cool pure air of its nights, for rehabilitating your nerves; and I am impatient for Mrs. Damer's return from Rome, because I flatter myself that she will send a good account of your convalescence.

Well! you find I have seen your principied Earl[1]. Curiosity carried me to a great concert at Mrs. Cosway's t'other night—not to hear Rubinelli, who sung *one* song at the extravagant price of ten guineas, and whom for as many shillings I have heard sing half a dozen at the Opera House; no, but I was curious to see an English Earl who had passed thirty years at Florence, and is more proud of a pinchbeck principality and a paltry Order from Wirtemberg, than he was of being a peer of Great Britain, when Great Britain *was* something. Had I stayed till it is *not*, I would have remained where I was. I merely meant to amuse my eyes; but Mr. Dutens brought the personage to me, and presented us to each other. He answered very well to my idea, for I should have taken his Highness for a Doge of Genoa: he has the awkward dignity of a temporary representative of nominal power. Peace be with him and his leaf-gold!

I believe that, after having often told you that I plead my age and relics of gout to dispense with doing what I don't like, you will conclude I am grown in my dotage as fond of Highnesses as Earl Cowper or Lady Mary Coke. Most certainly it was not the plan of any part of my life to

LETTER 2580.—[1] Earl Cowper. *Walpole.*

end my career with princes and princesses, though I began with them, and was carried to Leicester House in my childhood to play with the late Duke of Cumberland and Princess Mary. Fate has again in my latter days thrown me amongst royalties; and (what is not common), though I have quitted the world, I seem to have *retired into Drawing-rooms.* Ever since the late King's death I have made Princess Amelie's parties once or twice a week: then, *bien malgré moi,* I was plunged into Gloucester House: and now by Princess Amelie I have been presented to the Prince of Wales at her house; and by my niece Lady Horatia's marriage with Captain Conway, who is a principal favourite of his Royal Highness, I have dined with the Prince at Lord Hertford's, and since at his own palace, where he was pleased to give a dinner to the two families, who in fact were one family [2] before.

This parenthesis being passed, I am going to my quiet little hill, after having been in public to-day more than I purposed ever to be again. I attended Princess Amelie to the rehearsal of Handel's Jubilee in Westminster Abbey, which I had been far from meditating; but, as she had the Bishop of Rochester's gallery, it was quite easy, and I had no crowd to limp through. The sight was really very fine, and the performance magnificent; but the chorus and kettle-drums for four hours were so thunderful, that they gave me the headache, to which I am not at all subject. Rubinelli's voice sounded divinely sweet, and more distinctly than at the Opera. The Mara's not so well, nor is she so much the fashion. I have been but once at the Opera, and twice at the play, this year. When the gout confines me to my room it is a grievance: I do not complain of it for curtailing my diversions, for which I have no more

[2] Captain Conway's grandmother and Lady Horatia's grandmother were sisters. *Walpole.*

taste than for courts; nor shall death surprise me in a theatre or in a Drawing-room.

There has been no event of any consequence. I expect every day to hear of the marriage of your nephew and niece; and then I conclude the father will make you another visit, as he told me he should as soon as he has settled his daughter. I love to have him with you; not only for your comfort, but to save you the trouble of doing honours, which I dread for you since our peeresses have taken to travelling as much as their eldest sons.

I was pleased to-day by reflecting that though there were sixteen hundred persons present, who went in and out as they pleased, the extremest order and decency were observed, and not a guard was to be seen! Duchesses were mixed with the crowd, and not a bayonet was necessary—what a satire on governments, that sow them thick where fifty persons are assembled! How dares a short-lived mortal tell his own fellow-creatures that he is afraid to leave them at liberty at their own diversions?

2581. To the Earl of Buchan.

My Lord, Strawberry Hill, June 17, 1786.

I have received the honour of your Lordship's two letters, and have seen Mr. Browne[1], who has dined here and is to come again. He seems to have a great deal of intelligence, taste, and information. Mr. Fraser I am sorry I cannot serve. It is above ten years since I was in France; I have kept up no correspondence there at all, and have lost my particular friends. With very few of their *litterati* had I any acquaintance, and for far fewer much esteem. The Duc de

Letter 2581.—Collated with the original in the British Museum (Addit. MSS. 21,555).

[1] John Brown, an artist patronized by Lord Buchan.

Nivernois has been very kind to me and I have great respect for him; but as he lives very retired, I could not take the liberty of recommending to him a young man with whom I am not even acquainted myself.

The only Scottish portraits I have, or of persons connected with your Lordship's plan are the following, and of almost all but seven or eight prints are very common.

James V and Mary of Guise, his second Queen. Copies.
Mary Queen of Scots. Do.
James I, Charles I, Charles II, James II.
Lady Arabella Stuart.
Mary, Princess of Orange, daughter of Charles I. Copy.
Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans.
Second Duke of Lenox and Frances Howard his Duchess.
Queen of Bohemia.
Carr, Earl of Somerset, elderly.
His Countess, when young, copy; when old, original, but faded.
Duke of Lauderdale. Copy.
Chancellor Loudun[2].
Bishop Burnet.
Lord Mansfield, young.
John Law.

I have not Mr. Clerk's views, my Lord, and am much obliged to your Lordship for the offer of them, but would not put you to any trouble of procuring them. I am so old and infirm, that it would be idle in me to think of increasing my collection. I have no pursuits left, nor activity enough to meddle either with *virtù* or letters.

When I see Mr. Pinkerton—I do not know when it will

[2] John Campbell (1598–1663), first Earl of Loudoun and Lord Chancellor of Scotland.

be—I will acquaint him with your Lordship's obliging notice, and have the honour to be, with great respect,

My Lord, your Lordship's
Obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE[3].

2582. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Sunday night, June 18, 1786.

I SUPPOSE you have been swearing at the east wind for parching your verdure, and are now weeping for the rain that drowns your hay. I have these calamities in common, and my constant and particular one,—people that come to see my house, which unfortunately is more in request than ever. Already I have had twenty-eight sets, have five more tickets given out; and yesterday, before I had dined, three German barons came. My house is a torment, not a comfort!

I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury on Friday, and was forced to send to town for a dress-coat and a sword. There were the Prince of Wales, the Prince of Mecklenburg, the Duke of Portland, Lord Clanbrassil, Lord and Lady Clermont, Lord and Lady Southampton, Lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The Prince of Mecklenburg went back to Windsor after coffee; and the Prince and Lord and Lady Clermont to town after tea, to hear some new French players at Lady William Gordon's. The Princess, Lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at com-

[3] MS. note outside this letter by Lord Buchan:—'I had recommend[ed] Mr. John Brown, that accomplished and amiable youth, to Lord Orford's attentions and those of Mr. Joseph Townley—Mr. Townley employed him in drawing from his antique statues, for which he was the most capable of any man in Europe of his time.—His Homer and Pope I believe were the only pieces engraved, and those by Bartolozzi. I have given a sketch of Brown and Runciman in Anderson's *Bee*. They mutually painted a conversation portrait of themselves for Dryburgh Abbey.'

merce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy the Princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated. She would not excuse me. I promised she should have an ode on her next birthday, which diverted the Prince; but all would not do. So, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning:—

In deathless odes for ever green
 Augustus' laurels blow;
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen
 In warmer strains to flow.

Oh, why is Flaccus not alive,
 Your favourite scene to sing?
To Gunnersbury's charms could give
 His lyre immortal spring.

As warm as his my zeal for you,
 Great princess! could I show it:
But though you have a Horace too—
 Ah, Madam! he 's no poet.

If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer:—

I wish I had a name that could answer your pretty verses. Your yawning yesterday opened your vein for pleasing me; and I return you my thanks, my good Mr. Walpole, and remain sincerely your friend,

AMELIA.

I think this is very genteel at seventy-five.

Do you know that I have bought the Jupiter Serapis as well as the Julio Clovio[1]! Mr. —— assures me he has seen six of the head, and not one of them so fine, or so well

LETTER 2582.—[1] At the sale of the Duchess Dowager of Portland. *Walpole.*—The head of Jupiter Serapis in basaltes was purchased from the

preserved. I am glad Sir Joshua Reynolds saw no more excellence in the Jupiter than in the Clovio; or the Duke of Portland, I suppose, would have purchased it, as he has the vase, for a thousand pounds. I would not change. I told Sir William Hamilton and the late Duchess, when I never thought it would be mine, that I had rather have the head than the vase. I shall long for Mrs. Damer to make a bust to it, and then it will be still more valuable. I have deposited both the illumination and the Jupiter in Lady Di's cabinet[2], which is worthy of them. And here my collection winds up; I will not purchase trumpery after such jewels. Besides, everything is much dearer in old age, as one has less time to enjoy. Good night!

2583. To Richard Gough.

Berkeley Square, June 21, 1786.

On coming to town yesterday upon business, I found, Sir, your very magnificent and most valuable present[1], for which I beg you will accept my most grateful thanks. I am impatient to return to Twickenham to read it tranquilly. As yet I have only had time to turn the prints over, and to read the preface; but I see already that it is both a noble and laborious work, and will do great honour both to you and to your country. Yet one apprehension it has given me—I fear not living to see the second part! Yet I shall presume to keep it unbound; not only till it is perfectly dry and secure, but, as I mean the binding should be as fine as it deserves, I should be afraid of not having both volumes exactly alike.

Barberini collection at Rome by Sir William Hamilton and sold by him to the Duchess. The 'Julio Clovio' was the Book of Psalms, with twenty-one fine illuminations by Clovio, a scholar of Giulio Romano.

[2] A cabinet at Strawberry Hill, ornamented with drawings by Lady Diana Beauclerc. *Walpole.*

Letter 2583.—[1] The first volume of Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain.*

Your partiality, I doubt, Sir, has induced you to insert a paper not so worthy of the public regard as the rest of your splendid performance. My letter to Mr. Cole, which I am sure I had utterly forgotten to have ever written, was a hasty indigested sketch, like the rest of my scribblings, and never calculated to lead such well-meditated and accurate works as yours. Having lived familiarly with Mr. Cole from our boyhood, I used to write to him carelessly on the occasions that occurred. As it was always on subjects of no importance, I never thought of enjoining secrecy. I could not foresee that such idle communications would find a place in a great national work, or I should have been more attentive to what I said. Your taste, Sir, I fear, has for once been misled: and I shall be sorry for having innocently blemished a single page.

Since your partiality (for such it certainly was) has gone so far, I flatter myself you will have retained enough to accept, not a retribution, but a trifling mark of my regard, in the little volume that accompanies this; in which you will find that another too favourable reader [2] has bestowed on me more distinction than I could procure for myself, by turning my slight *Essay on Gardening* into the pure French of the last age; and, which is wonderful, has not debased Milton by French poetry: on the contrary, I think Milton has given a dignity to French poetry—nay, and harmony! both which I thought that language almost incapable of receiving. As I would wish to give all the value I can to my offering, I will mention that I have printed but four hundred copies, half of which went to France; and as this is an age in which mere rarities are preferred to commoner things of intrinsic worth—as I have found by the ridiculous prices given for some of my insignificant publications, merely because they are scarce—I hope, under the

[2] The Duc de Nivernais.

title of a kind of curiosity, my thin piece will be admitted into your library.

If you would indulge me so far, Sir, as to let me know when I might hope to see the second part, I would calculate how many more fits of the gout I may weather, and would be still more strict in my regimen. I hope, at least, that you will not wait for the engravers, but will accomplish the text for the sake of the world: in this I speak disinterestedly. Though you are much younger than I am, I would have your part of the work secure: engravers may always proceed, or be found; another author cannot. I have the honour to be, with great gratitude, Sir,

Your much obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. I add a little piece[3] which is also rare here; Sir Horace Mann sent me four, and I beg your acceptance of one.

2584. To Sir Horace Mann.

June 22, 1786.

I HAVE not yet received your letter by Mrs. Damer, my dear Sir; but I have that of June 3rd, which announces it. I lament the trouble your cough gives you, though I am quite persuaded that it is medicinal, and diverts the gout from critical parts. I have felt so much, and consequently have observed so much, of chronical disorders, that I don't think I deceive myself. Should you tell me your complaint is not gouty, I should reply that all chronical distempers are or ought to be gout; and, when they do not appear in their proper form, are only deviations. Coughs in old persons clear the lungs; and, as I have told you, I know

[3] A Panegyric on Captain Cook.

two elderly persons who are never so well as when they have a cough.

I love Mrs. Damer for her attention to you; but I shall scold her, instead of you, for letting you send me the cameo. To you I will not say a cross word when you are weak; but why will you not let me love you without being obliged to it by gratitude? You make me appear in my own eyes interested; a dirty quality, of which I flattered myself I was totally free. Gratitude may be a virtue; but what is a man who consents to have fifty obligations to be so virtuous? I have always professed hating presents: must not I appear a hypocrite, when I have accepted so many from you? Well! as I have registered them all in the printed catalogue of my collection, I hope I shall be called a mercenary wretch. I deserve it.

Nothing you tell me of the Episcopal Count[1] surprises me—he is horrible! His nephew Fitzgerald, whom his Holiness, though knowing his infernal character, had destined to put into orders and present with a rich living, had it fallen vacant, is hanged for a most atrocious murder, which has brought out others still blacker; but the story is too shocking for your good-natured feeble nerves. The great culprit Hastings's fate is not decided; but, to his and mankind's surprise, the House of Commons last week voted him on one of the articles deserving to be impeached, and Mr. Pitt declared on that article against him: so, Burke has proved to have been in the right in his prosecution.

The French prisoners[2] have come off better than I expected. I said early I was sure I should never understand the story: I am very sure now that I do not. Never did I like capital punishments; but, when they are committed,

LETTER 2584. — [1] The Earl of Bristol, who was also Bishop of Derry.

[2] The persons concerned in the affair of the diamond necklace.

how comes so prodigious a robbery to escape? The Cardinal, supposing him merely a dupe, is not sufficiently punished [3]. A prince may be duped by a low wretch; a low man may be bubbled by a prince: but it is not excusable in a man who has kept both the best and the worst company to be made such a tool. I would at least have sequestered his revenues, till the jewellers were paid; for I do not see why the Cardinal's family should suffer for his roguery or folly: and then I would have deprived him of his employments, as incapable. For that rascal Cagliostro, he should be punished for joining in the mummery, and shut up for his other impositions. For his legend, it is more preposterous, absurd, and incredible than anything in the *Arabian Nights*. He is come hither—and why should one think but he may be popular here too! But enough of criminals and adventurers: though perhaps it is not much changing the theme to tell you that I have received a letter from Constantinople, as I had one from Petersburg, before that from Venice, after the heroine [4] had left Florence. She is now gone to the Greek isles, and bids me next direct to Vienna. I have answered none; I had a mind to direct to the Fiancée du Roi de Garbe [5]. I shall at least stay till I hear that she is not a prize to some corsair.

Your nephew and niece, I hear, are married. The father [6], I hope, will now soon make you another visit; I love to have him with you.

I talked of gratitude, but recollect that I have not even thanked you for your cameo. I hope this looks like not being delighted with it:—how can I say such a brutal thing? I am charmed with your kindness, though I wished for no more proofs of it. In short, I don't know how to

[3] He was acquitted, banished for a few months to one of his abbeys, deprived of the *Cordon Bleu*, and of the office of Grand Almoner.

[4] Lady Craven.

[5] See note 4 on letter to Selwyn of Sept. 9, 1771.

[6] Sir Horace Mann the younger.

steer between my inclination for expressing my full sense of your friendship, and my pride, that is not fond of being obliged—and so very often obliged—by those I love most. Oh, but I have a much worse vice than pride (which, begging the clergy's pardon, I don't think a very heinous one, as it is a counter-poison to meanness)—I am monstrously ungrateful; I have received a thousand valuable presents from you, and yet never made you one! I shall begin to think I am avaricious too. In short, my dear Sir, your cameo is a mirror in which I discover a thousand faults, of which I did not suspect myself, besides all those which I did know: no, no, I will not lecture Mrs. Damer, but myself. I absolve you, and am determined to think myself a prodigy of rapacity! I see there is no merit in not loving money, if one loves playthings. I have often declaimed against collectors, who will do anything mean to obtain a rarity they want: pray, is that so bad as accepting curiosities, and never making a return? Oh, I am the most ungrateful of all virtuosos, as you are the most generous of all friends! Well! the worse I think of myself, the better I think of you, and that is some compensation for the contempt I have for myself; and I will be content to serve as a foil to you. Adieu[7].

2585. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1786.

It is no wonder, Madam, that I durst not recommence, who know that I ought to think of nothing but finishing. Your Ladyship tells me of my *lively ideas*, and the news-

[7] Sir H. Mann growing much worse, Mr. W. addressed a few more letters on that occasion to the younger Sir Horace, who was arrived at Florence to attend his uncle. The latter died November 16, 1786, aged eighty-one, and was interred at Linton in Kent. *Walpole.*

papers flatter me that I am a *well-preserved veteran*; but my weak fingers, my tottering steps, and, above all, my *internal* looking-glass, are more faithful monitors, and whisper certain truths to one ear, that the sycophant self-love at the other ear cannot obliterate. Indeed, I had nothing to write; I know nothing, and the sameness of summers makes me afraid of repeating what I may have said twenty times. The great lines of my little life are indeed (very contrary to my intentions and to all the colour of my progress) marked with red letters like the almanac, that is, tinged by princes and princesses.

Princess Amelie breakfasted here last week, and I have dined again at Gunnersbury, where were the Prince of Wales and the Prince of Mecklenburg; and that dinner produced an event which composes my whole annal. They went to drink tea at the dairy. I did not choose to limp so far, and stayed behind with Lady Barrymore, Lady Clermont, and Mrs. Howe. However, I was summoned and forced to go. It was to command me to write verses on Gunnersbury—'Lord! Madam,' said I, 'I am superannuated.' She insisted. 'Well, Madam, if I must, your Royal Highness shall have an ode on your next birthday.' All would not save me, though I protested against the rigour of the injunction. As it happened, the following trifle came into my head in the coach as I returned home:—[see p. 387.]

I sent it next morning to her breakfast, and received this gracious and genteel answer:—[see p. 387.]

To explain this, your Ladyship must know that the ancient laureate gaped in the evening at the commerce-table, which, I can tell Miss Burney[1], is a great sin on any Palatine Hill. The moment the Princess came hither t'other morning and spied the shield with Medusa's head on

LETTER 2585.—[1] See p. 397.

the staircase, she said, 'Oh, now I see where you learnt to yawn.'

I am glad for *her* interest, but sorry for my own, that Evelina and Cecilia are to be transformed into a Madame de Motteville, as I shall certainly not live to read her memoirs, though I might another novel.

I readily believe that Lord Euston's little girl is a fine child, Madam; I never saw her, but she has good claims: nor do I know where Lord Euston is absent. My nepotism is so very extended, that I cannot follow their sojournings through the maps of so many counties, nay, nor of countries.

This summer may be very fine, but it is not quite to my taste: the sun never appears till as late as the fashionable people in town; and then has not much more warmth. However, he has made me amends in hay: I asked why they were so long mowing one of my meadows? they said, it was so thick they could not cut it. I have really double the quantity of any other year: yet I doubt these riches will not indemnify me for the Portland sale! However, here my collection closes: I will not buy sparks, since I have acquired such a bulse of jewels. Adieu, Madam, the *modern* post goes out so early, that I shall scarce save it.

2586. To George Augustus Selwyn.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1786.

I have received the books that you was so kind as to leave for me at Richmond, and am sorry I did not know that you would have liked to have taken them with you, which I could have lent you without the least compliment as I had read them this winter; and because they amused me, though very tedious on the articles and prices of pro-

Letter 2586. — Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Rev. John Wild.

visions, I desired Dr. Gem to get them for me; and I must now beg you to put me into the way of paying him for them; for I certainly do not mean that he should make me a present.

I think you quite in the right to prefer Richmond to Gloucestershire, or rather, to live most where you are most amused. Nor do I say this not merely from self-interest, though I readily own that I am very glad of your decision. I pass as many lonely hours as most men, but I choose to have company with whom I *can* converse within reach: and that company must at least be such as have lived in the same world as I have. It is too great a constraint, when one is old, to adapt one's conversation to people whose ideas are totally different, and indeed one makes a foolish figure when one attempts it. One is like my Aunt Townshend[1], who hoped Alderman Bury was very well[2]. It is still more natural for me to rejoice in having you for my near neighbour, who have delighted in your company for above half a century, and who have outlived so many with whom I was intimate, and who have little propensity for connecting myself with new generations. The newspapers compliment me on being a well-preserved veteran. I, who feel myself weak and lame, and crippled, thought everybody saw me as I see myself—but I will not believe them, nor be flattered into attempting feats of activity. I will not leap over the back of a chair like Sir Joseph Yorke! On the contrary I find many comforts in being infirm. It serves me for an excuse against whatever I do not like to do. They who disguise their age and counterfeit juvenility, put themselves

[1] Dorothy (d. 1726), sister of Sir Robert Walpole, and second wife of second Viscount Townshend.

[2] 'When Lord Townshend was Secretary of State to George I, some City dames came to visit his lady, with whom she was little acquainted. Meaning to be mighty civil and return their visits, she asked one of them where she lived? The other replied, near Aldermanbury. "Oh," cried Lady Townshend, "I hope the Alderman is well."' (*Walpoliana*, vol. i. pp. 14–5.)

to an hundred tortures unnecessarily, and yet deceive nobody but themselves.

Adieu, my dear Sir,
Most sincerely yours,
H. Walpole.

2586*. To Dr. Burney.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1786.

You cannot possibly imagine, dear Sir, how I rejoice for her sake and yours on the preferment of Miss Burney[1]; which indeed is a very generous proceeding on my side, as I fear she will not now stoop

from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights to the expanse below[2]

and condescend to visit the *veteran of Strawberry Hill*, though he were as *well preserved* as the newspapers flatter him he is.

I certainly would not detract from your daughter's merit, nor from the goodness and judgement of the Queen; yet I do suspect that Mrs. Delany has a little contributed to the success by her recommendation. My good friend in truth is but a baby of a courtier, or she would not introduce a young favourite to supplant herself—but she will grow wiser in time; and as Miss Burney has a vast way to go before she learns to have a bad heart, I trust she will not undermine Mrs. Delany, but be content with succeeding her and with living as long and as honourably. This is still more generous than my former generosity, since I cannot possibly live to be witness to the whole career of her triumphs, as I am to her brilliant dawn.

Letter 2586*. — Not in C.; reprinted by kind permission of Archdeacon Burney, owner of the original letter.

[1] Miss Burney had been appointed Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte.

[2] Gray, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*

As you, dear Sir, may still find a day of leisure, I hope you will bestow it on

Yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

2587. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 22, 1786.

In your last, Madam, you sent me a list of topics, on which we are not to talk for fear of disagreeing. It would be exceedingly difficult for me to disagree with your Ladyship on all of them, as of some I know no more than a babe unborn; nor of the rest more than the newspapers, which are not my rule of faith, tell me. Moreover, as I neither love disputation, nor have any zeal for making converts, I shall certainly tap no subject on which I might be likely not to be of your Ladyship's sentiments. As far as I know what your political sentiments are, I should rather imagine that we do agree, for I am sure you are in the right, and I am not quite ready to think that I am in the wrong, as we neither of us ever think or act from partiality, prejudice, or motives of personal affection or resentment: and principles being less subject to be warped than our passions, it is probable that our opinions are perfectly consonant; and when that is the case, it is still more useless to discuss topics on which we already know each other's mind. A neutral person perhaps would conclude that one of us at least must be very determined to think everything right on one side and wrong on the other, when, on a medley of questions of the most heterogeneous natures, we dare not touch one for fear of squabbling. But such a person would be strangely in the dark, from not knowing that I am always ready to change my opinions in conformity to yours; and that you are so persuaded of my deference to your

sentiments, that out of generosity you will not start a thought that might at first sight create a doubt in me, and that at the next minute I might adopt as being yours, before I was clearly convinced of its being well founded: though I should indubitably find it so on knowing the grounds of your reasoning. At present I am so totally in the dark on all that is passing, and whatever does happen is of so little importance to one of my age, and who has no children who will be interested in the consequences, that to save myself the trouble of uneasy prospects, I determine to think with Pope that

Whatever is, is right,

and in that composure I am secure of not disagreeing with your Ladyship.

I wish this district supplied me with any matter that would entertain you; but a village near the capital has only the news and the fish that have been hawked about in town. Poor Lord Grantham is dead, I do believe, though the papers say so; but I heard two days ago that he could not outlive the night.

I hope our daily oracles lie, according to their laudable practice, about the Whiteboys; at least, I flatter myself that our Lord's domains are unmolested by them. I am surprised they are not quieted and all made peers.

I shall go to London next week to see Mrs. Damer, who is expected from Paris. If the weather continues as cold as it has been these two last nights, I will settle for the winter.

2588. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 2, 1786.

You would have been very unjust, my dear Lady, which you are not, if you had been *seriously* angry with me for

joking with you on your politics; you said you would not name them lest we should disagree: I, on my side, with the same good and peaceable intention, and who, you really know, never do dispute about anything, replied jesting. Now it would have been hard if you had been offended at my listening under Democritus, when you yourself had pointed out to me to avoid Heraclitus. I had rather be ready, with Dr. Warton, to panegyricize everything; but when he himself is reduced to generals, and can find no particular theme for an encomium, it is fair for me to resort to one of the other three divisions; for politics must range under one of the four: one must admire, lament, laugh at, or be indifferent about whatever happens. My time of life, and the multitude of events I have seen, dispose me to indifference; but to keep up good humour, when you were afraid of our being too grave, I preferred smiling—and there I hope the matter will rest. It is for this reason I reply so soon, and because you are going to wander, and I might not know where to overtake you.

I have heard that the Duke of Bedford has ordered Mr. Palmer[1] to have all his palaces ready for him; which is considered as an expulsion of the Queen Dowager[2]. If it is only to make room for another antique[3], old woman for old woman, I should think one's own grandmother might be preferable to one that, for many reasons, might be grandmother of half London; but, as about politics, I leave everybody to judge for himself, nor is it any business of mine whether young Hamlet *speaks daggers* to Gertrude[4] or not.

The vase for which your Ladyship is so good as to

LETTER 2588.—[1] The guardian of the Duke.

[2] The Dowager Duchess of Bedford.

[3] The Duke had a fancy for Lady Maynard, formerly notorious as Nancy Parsons.

[4] The Christian name of the Dowager Duchess.

interest yourself, was not the famous cat's *lofty vase*, nor one of any consequence, but a vase and dish of Florentine fayence, that stood under the table in the round chamber; nor had I the least concern but for the company who were so grieved at the accident. With the troops that come, I am amazed I have not worse damage; however, I am sometimes diverted too. Last week a scientific lady was here, and exactly at the moment that I opened the cabinet of enamels, she turned to a gentleman who came with her, and entered into a discussion of the ides and calends. Another gentlewoman was here two days ago, who had seen a good half-century: she said, 'Well, I must live another *forty* years to have time to see all the curiosities of this house.' These little incidents of character do not make me amends for being the master of a puppet-show, for though I generally keep behind the scenes, I am almost as much disturbed as if I constantly exhibited myself—and

Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath day to me[5]!

P.S. I am told that this has been a fine summer—and in one respect I allow it, for it has brought the winter so forward already, that my grate was in full blow on Monday night with a good fire!

2589. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 29, 1786.

Since I received the honour of your Lordship's last, I have been at Park Place for a few days. Lord and Lady Frederick Campbell and Mrs. Damer were there. We went on the Thames to see the new bridge at Henley, and Mrs. Damer's colossal masks. There is not a sight in the

[5] Pope, *Prologue to Satires*, l. 12.

island more worthy of being visited. The bridge is as perfect as if bridges were natural productions, and as beautiful as if it had been built for Wentworth Castle; and the masks as if the Romans had left them here. We saw them in a fortunate moment; for the rest of the time was very cold and uncomfortable, and the evenings as chill as many we have had lately. In short, I am come to think that the beginning of an old ditty, which passes for a collection of blunders, was really an old English pastoral, it is so descriptive of our climate:—

> Three children sliding on the ice
> All on a summer's day——

I have been overwhelmed more than ever by visitants to my house. Yesterday I had Count Oginski, who was a pretender to the crown of Poland at the last election, and has been stripped of most of a vast estate. He had on a ring of the new King of Prussia, or I should have wished him joy on the death[1] of one of the plunderers of his country.

It has long been my opinion that the out-pensioners of Bedlam are so numerous, that the shortest and cheapest way would be to confine in Moorfields the few that remain in their senses, who would then be safe; and let the rest go at large. They are the out-pensioners who are for destroying poor dogs! The whole canine race never did half so much mischief as Lord George Gordon; nor even worry hares, but when hallooed on by men. As it is a persecution of animals, I do not love hunting; and what old writers mention as a commendation makes me hate it the more, its being an image of war. Mercy on us! that destruction of any species should be a sport or a merit! What cruel unreflecting imps we are! Everybody is unwilling to die;

LETTER 2589. — [1] Frederick the Great died at Potsdam on Aug. 17, 1786. He was succeeded by his nephew, Frederick William II.

yet sacrifices the lives of others to momentary pastime, or to the still emptier vapour, fame! A hero or a sportsman who wishes for longer life is desirous of prolonging devastation. We shall be crammed, I suppose, with panegyrics and epitaphs on the King of Prussia; I am content that he can now have an epitaph. But, alas, the Emperor will write one for him probably in blood! and, while he shuts up convents for the sake of population, will be stuffing hospitals with maimed soldiers, besides making thousands of widows!

I have just been reading a new published History of the Colleges in Oxford, by Anthony Wood; and there found a feature in a character that always offended me, that of Archbishop Chicheley, who prompted Henry the Fifth to the invasion of France, to divert him from squeezing the overgrown clergy. When that priest meditated founding All Souls, and 'consulted his friends (who seem to have been honest men) what great matter of piety he had best perform to God in his old age, he was advised by them to build an hospital for the wounded and sick soldiers that daily returned from the wars then had in France'; —I doubt his Grace's friends thought as I do of his artifice;—'but,' continues the historian, 'disliking those motions, and valuing the welfare of the deceased more than the wounded and diseased, he resolved with himself to promote his design, which was, to have masses said for the King, Queen, and himself, &c., while living, and for their souls when dead.' And that mummery the old foolish rogue thought more efficacious than ointments and medicines for the wretches he had made! And of the chaplains and clerks he instituted in that dormitory, one was to teach grammar, and another prick-song. How history makes one shudder and laugh by turns! But I fear I have wearied your Lordship with my idle declamation, and you will repent having

commanded me to send you more letters; and I can only plead that I am

Your (perhaps too) obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2590. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 30, 1786.

How the Israelites contrived to make bricks without straw I cannot tell; though, to be sure, there are succedaneums for everything. Letters, I know, can be made of lies, as well as newspapers; and we have large manufactures at Richmond and Hampton Court wrought by old ladies themselves, as they used to make japan, by cutting prints to pieces and daubing them over with colours and varnish; and they are so generous that they give their wares to anybody that will retail them. But though I am hard driven to keep up a correspondence in these halcyon days when there are no more events than in Paradise, not even a new peer made, I neither care to coin nor clip. By the way, I wonder what people will do in the next world for want of newspapers, where everything will be settled to all eternity, and where we know there is to be no marrying or giving in marriage, and then of course there will be no lyings-in, no Gretna Greens, &c., &c. Pray, Madam, do you think there will be any change of fashion? Do angels always wear the same patterns for their clothes? Oh, I find I could make a letter long enough if I were to indulge all the questions that rush into my head; but I will return to earth and grovel, as I generally do, within the bounds of my own parish. I have, indeed, been for a few days at Park Place, and seen the delight of my eyes, the new bridge at Henley—

A Senator of Rome, while Rome survived,

would have allowed it worthy of the Tiber: and it traverses a river a thousand times more beautiful; and some Verres, I suppose, some time or other, will strip it of Mrs. Damer's colossal masks, and transport them to the capital of Europe, or America, or wherever that is to be. The Emperor, to be sure, intends it shall be Vienna, now the King of Prussia is dead. As I hate both those heroes, and all such captains of banditti, I shall *go up* to Berlin with no address of condolence; not that I disdain knighthood on a good occasion, and have offered to accept it, if my *addresses* are accepted. You must know, Lady Charleville[1] has taken a house between my niece, Mrs. Keppel, and the Duchess of Montrose. That dowager has buried Captain Mayne, her second consort, whom she married in an arbour by moonlight, and whom she obliged to take her family name of Coghill that he might be her heir, as he was certainly fitter to be her son than her husband; and she remains possessed of 6,000*l.* a year but no *child*. *Therefore* I have commissioned my two friends above mentioned to propose *me*, and to offer that I will condescend to be Sir Horatio Coghill; and if she will waive the arbour scene, she being still more gouty than I am, I engage that like old Jack Harris and his first wife, I will ring the bell and order the groom of the chamber to wheel us to one another, when we have a need to kiss. You shall know, Madam, if the treaty succeeds, and may depend on having a favour.

I admire the Duchess Dowager for holding out Woburn to the last moment. We shall now see which of the venerable matrons triumphs. I hope Duchess Nancy[2] will call in Mr. Hastings: he would turn the old Begum[3] into the

LETTER 2590.—[1] Hester (d. 1789), daughter and heiress of Dr. James Coghill; m. 1. (1737) Charles Moore, first Earl of Charleville; 2. Major John Mayne, of Richings, Buckinghamshire, who took the name of Coghill, and was created a Baronet in 1781.

[2] Lady Maynard.

[3] An allusion to Hastings's treatment of the Begums of Oude.

highway in her pattens, and boast of it when he had done.

I conclude your campaign in Farming Woods is now opening, Madam. Mr. Hatton, I hear, intends to refit Kirby, and inhabit it, and as he has the true patina of the Finches,—

Will breathe a browner horror on the woods.

I like the restoration of those ancient palaces, and I suppose it will now be accessible as this age has invented good roads, which our worthy ancestors did not think at all a necessary ingredient in living comfortably. We are so effeminate that we hate being jolted to death, or dug out of a hollow way—but everything degenerates!

Mr. Fox, I am told, is at Cheltenham, entirely occupied with taming a young rabbit. This is Mr. Hare's account; but he is partial. For my part I suspect that he is teaching it to exercise that terrible weapon a dessert-knife. But whether he is or not, I think there ought to be an Act of Parliament against eating anything but spoon-meat.

Lady Charleville has just sent me a flat refusal; so that if I have a mind to have children of my own to inherit Strawberry, I must look for—

Arbutei foetus alibi—

This is a little disappointment; but when one has threescore nephews and nieces, one cannot want heirs. Nay, I still want a month of sixty-nine—*nous verrons.*

2591. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1786.

As I conclude, Madam, that by this time you are, at least, as real an inhabitant of the woods as Peter the Wild

Boy[1], or that guileless savage the Marquis of Lansdowne[2], who would make one believe, like Biddy Tipkin in *The Tender Husband*[3], 'that he lives on hips and haws, and is mighty fond of pignuts'; I direct to Farming Woods rather than to the honour of Ampthill. I should have answered your last sooner, but had nothing to tell you; and at present all my gleanings would not load a parish girl's little paw. Except the sad deaths of two happy young women, Lady Graham and Lady Harriet Elliot[4], I know no event but the death of Mr. Charles Hamilton, one of my patriarchs of modern gardening, who has been killed by Anstey, author of *The Bath Guide*.

Mr. Hamilton, who had built a house in the Crescent, was also at eighty-three eager in planting a new garden, and wanted some acres, which Anstey, his neighbour, not so ancient, destined to the same use. Hamilton wrote a warm letter on their being refused; and Anstey, who does not hate a squabble in print, as he has more than once shown, discharged shaft upon shaft against the poor veteran, and—

> The grey goose-quill that was thereon
> In his heart's blood was wet[5];

for he died of the volley, as even a goose-quill will do the feat at eighty-three, and surely, since the *first* edition of *The Bath Guide*, never was a duller goose than Anstey! This is a literary anecdote, not much known, I believe, in the coffee-houses on Parnassus.

LETTER 2591.—[1] An idiot found in 1725 in a wild state in a wood near Hameln in Hanover. He was brought to England by order of Queen Caroline (then Princess of Wales). At the time of his death in 1785 he had been maintained for many years at a farm at Berkhampstead on a pension allowed by Government. He had never learned to speak.

[2] The Marquis of Lansdowne was now living in retirement at Bowood.

[3] A comedy by Steele.

[4] Lady Harriet Pitt, second daughter of first Earl of Chatham, and sister of Mr. Pitt; m. (1785) Hon. Edward James Eliot, eldest son of first Baron Eliot.

[5] An imitation of the lines in the ballad of *Chevy Chase*:—

'The swane fethars that his arrowe bar,
With his hart blode the weare wete.'

I was last week of a small party at Lady Clifford's[6] at Richmond, and half of the company consisted of pinchbeck royalties, for there were the grandmother Princess Dowager Mrs. Molyneux[7], her son-in-law, Mr. Smyth[8], father of Ines de Castro[9], his sister, Lady Langdale[10], and I. Lady Mary Coke, who envies us for having mixed our alloy with the standard, when her own counterfeit is but a Birmingham shilling that never had the impress and titles on it, would swear that we met to hatch a new Gunpowder Plot. It is incredible how she has toiled tooth and nail to couple Ines with Margery Nicholson[11]. For my part, the rencontre put me in mind of Lady Dorchester, who meeting the Duchess of Portsmouth and Lady Orkney[12] in the Drawing-room at Windsor in the beginning of George I, cried out, 'Heavens! who would have thought that we three royal w——s should meet here!'

Oct. 1st.

I began my letter three days ago, and it was barren enough, so I postponed it on a prospect of imperial recruits.

[6] Hon. Apollonia Langdale, daughter of fifth Baron Langdale; m. (1780) Hugh Edward Henry Clifford, fifth Baron Clifford, of Chudleigh; d. 1815.

[7] Maria, daughter of James Levery; m. 1. Joseph Griffin; 2. John Errington; 3. Hon. Thomas Molyneux. By her second marriage she had a daughter who married Mr. Smythe and was the mother of Mrs. Fitzherbert; by her third she had a son who succeeded as ninth Viscount Molyneux in 1759, and was created Earl of Sefton in 1771.

[8] Walter Smythe, of Brambridge, Hampshire.

[9] That is, Mrs. Fitzherbert—Maria Anne Smythe, m. 1. (1775) Edward Weld, of Lulworth, Dorsetshire (who died in the same year); 2. (1778) Thomas Fitzherbert, of Swynnerton, Staffordshire (who died in 1781). The Prince of Wales first saw Mrs. Fitzherbert in 1785. They were married in December of that year—a union which, according to the Royal Marriage Act of 1772, was invalid. Mrs. Fitzherbert kept her place in the best society and was invariably treated with respect by the royal family. She left the Prince in 1803 and died at Brighton in 1837. She was the only woman to whom George IV was sincerely devoted.

[10] Constantia, daughter of Sir John Smythe, third Baronet; m. Marmaduke Langdale, fifth Baron Langdale.

[11] A lunatic who attempted to assassinate the King on Aug. 2, 1786.

[12] Elizabeth (d. 1733), daughter of Sir Edward Villiers, Knight, and wife of George Hamilton, first Earl of Orkney—a title bestowed upon him shortly after his marriage. Lady Orkney was the mistress of William III.

I had notice that the Archduke[13] and Archduchess desired a ticket to see

My Gothic Vatican of Greece and Rome[14],

and that I would name the day. I replied, I could not presume to send a ticket, or name a day, but that their Royal Highnesses might command me and my nutshell whenever they pleased, if they would be so good as to excuse such a reception as a decrepit old man could give them. Accordingly I made no preparation but of coffee, tea, and chocolate; and as I am a courtier of the old rock, *only two cups* were set for their arch-highnesses in the Round Chamber, and none for their suite. In two days I could not make an entertainment, nor do I pique myself on vulgar ostentation, nor could light up the garden with coloured lamps by daylight, and when the leaves are falling and my orange-trees gone into winter quarters. It was intimated that I might expect them to-day. The morning was of the best October gold, and the sun himself came to do the honours of my house; however, I began to fear they would serve him as they did at Hampton Court, and not arrive till six o'clock; but at near two, as I sat watching for Heyducs and Pandours to come powdering down my avenue, I saw a gang of foot-passengers in boots and riding-dresses strolling from Twickenham, holiday folks as I thought,—but at last one of the troop ran before, who, I perceived, was the Venetian resident[15]. I hurried down to the gate, and the resident named the Archduke and Madame—and Prince and Princess Albani, &c., in short, they were eleven.

Well! they have been here above an hour, were exceedingly civil, totally unceremonious, commended everything,

[13] Ferdinand Charles Antony, Archduke of Austria and Governor of Milan, third son of the Empress Maria Theresa. His wife was Maria Beatrix of Este, daughter of the Duke of Modena.

[14] 'A Gothic library! of Greece and Rome.' (Pope, *Dunciad*, Bk. i. l. 145.)

[15] M. Soderini.

were really charmed with the situation and views, especially the Archduke; and Prince Albani, who does know, marked the right pictures, and they all fell pell-mell on the biscuits and bread and butter, but tasted nothing liquid. The Archduke is rather a little man, and if Mr. Hare were to ask, as he did Garrick, whether he looked much like an *eagle*[16], I could not say yes. The Archduchess is not a beauty, but better than I had heard, seems sensible, and is very conversant in our history. I had rummaged that old garret, my memory, for recollections of the month I passed at the Fair of Reggio, with the Archduchess's grandsire and grandam, the Duke and Duchess of Modena, in the year of our Lord 1741. I had recalled the Serene Duke's figure, with a mound of vermilion on the left side of his forehead to symmetrize with a wen on the right, and his sister, the Princess Benedict, who was painted and peeled like an old summer-house, with bristles on her chin sprouting through a coat of plaster,—but I did not intend to draw these portraits; and, above all things, put a gag on my tongue, lest it should blurt out the dreadful compliment I blundered on to the Duchess of Modena on her own mother's jealousy of her. But I had no occasion for my caution; there was such a babel of Italian dialect, and the Archduke has such a very sharp *faussette*, that my meek voice could not be distinguished. Well! it is happily over: they expressed satisfaction, and, at least, were better pleased than with their *no* reception at Blenheim by the Prince of Mindleheim[17].

This detail, which I might have given in fewer words, and was not worth giving at all, may fill up a chink in an evening after a whole morning's shooting.

[16] See letter to Mason of Feb. 27, 1777.

[17] The Duke of Marlborough. The great Duke of Marlborough received that principality in 1705 as a reward for services rendered to the Empire.

P.S. The Austrian ovation came to me from Pope's[18], whence they had sent their coaches to the inn.

2592. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 13, 1786.

Far be it from me, Madam, to think that you ought to answer my letters incontinently. They very seldom contain anything that requires or deserves a reply. Your own last lay long before I wrote again. In fact, this only comes to ask if you did receive one that I sent on Monday was se'nnight, directed to Farming Woods, where the time of year made me conclude you were. If it lies there till this time twelvemonth, it will not signify; but I would not have your Ladyship think that I have been still more remiss than I really have been. Though indolence would be very excusable at my age, want of matter is oftener the cause of my silence. Therefore, when I have spun three pages out of nothing, I like to have the merit of the deed; and as you will give me credit for the assertion, your gamekeeper is welcome to light his pipe with my epistle.

2593. To John Pinkerton.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 18, 1786.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for the notice, and your kind intentions. I have various copies of King Charles's collection; but the one you mention is probably more curious, and what I should be very glad to have; and if I can afford it, will give whatever shall be thought reasonable; for I would by no means take advantage of the poor man's ignorance or necessity. I therefore should wish to have it estimated by some connoisseur; and though the

[18] Pope's villa at Twickenham.

notes may be foolish, they would not prejudice the information I should like to get. I must go to town on Friday, and will call on you; and if you cannot be at home, be so good as to leave the MS., and I will bring it back to you the next day, or Sunday, as I return hither.

Yours sincerely,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2594. To THOMAS WALPOLE THE YOUNGER.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 25, 1786.

IT would be most unreasonable, dear Sir, if so superannuated a correspondent as I am should expect you to write frequently to me. In winter the gout commonly prevents my using my fingers, as was the case of the two last; and, in summer, I live here where I know nothing worth repeating, as the newspapers, which are not reserved, must have proved to you. They lie or blunder, but somehow or other

They catch the eel of *science* by the tail[1].

You have had a material event in Germany, the death of the King of Prussia. I do not perceive that it made much public sensation here, even amongst the pamphlet shops; not so much as Dr. Johnson's—but of him there is an end too. His devotees have convinced the public what fools they were for idolizing him as they did. We have had a slip of Germany here, that awakened some attention: the Archduke and his wife. But they are gone and forgotten too. In my own connections there has been an

LETTER 2594.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 96–9.

[1] 'Yet holds the eel of Science by the tail.' (*Dunciad*, Bk. i. l. 280.)

agreeable event; the Duke of Grafton has seen Lady Euston, and treated her very kindly. She is, in return, going to make him a present of another grandchild, which is not the greatest desideratum in that family. Some of your relations, I suppose, have told you that Dr. Hor. Hammond [2] is dead. So no doubt you know is my good old friend and your acquaintance, Lord Dacre; and Princess Amelia is not expected to live a week. Such are the events only with which I could fill my letters, as they affect me, and reduce my very contracted circle, but are little interesting to you; and consequently I could not expect that you should draw upon me for such intelligence. Your sisters, who write so well, have certainly supplied you better and with younger intelligence.

I am much obliged to you for offering to trouble yourself with commissions at Paris; but, if all my objects are narrowed here, they are almost totally so there. At most, I shall beg you just to inform yourself how many numbers of the *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* have been published: and, when you arrive, I will trouble you to send for those I want, as I have received none a great while: and I will desire you to pay for what numbers I am indebted of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, for which I will repay you. Should you see Dr. Gem, might I ask you to inquire whether Mr. Selwyn has repaid him, as I desired, for *Les Mœurs des François*? If not, shall I beg you to discharge that debt also?

Madame de Cambis is in England, but I have not yet seen her, but hope I shall. My good Duchess de la Valière I never can forget, and the old Maréchales and Madame de Jonsac, and I should wish to be mentioned to [them] if you see them. Of the last I have heard nothing a great while. The Duc de Nivernois has done me too much honour not to

[2] A first cousin of Horace Walpole.

be sure how much I respect him. Vanity never forgets obligations.

You will find Tonton in as good health and spirits as ever, and so entire a favourite that I doubt I cannot impute my fondness to gratitude too. I hope that he will show you that his memory is as perfect as his other perfections, and that he is much yours as, dear Sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

P. S. Will you be so good as to inform yourself whether Beaumarchais's edition of Voltaire is totally stopped?

2595. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 29, 1786.

I was sorry not to be apprised of your intention of going to town, where I would have met you; but I knew it too late, both as I was engaged, and as you was to return so soon. I mean to come to Park Place in a week or fortnight; but I should like to know what company you expect, or do not expect; for I had rather fill up your vacancies than be a supernumerary.

Lady Ossory has sent me two charades made by Colonel Fitzpatrick: the first she says is very easy, the second very difficult. I have not come within sight of the easy one; and, though I have a guess at the other, I do not believe I am right; and so I send them to you, who are master-general of the Œdipuses.

The first, that is so easy:—

In concert, song, or serenade,
My first requires my second's aid.
To those residing near the pole
I would not recommend my whole.

The two last lines, I conclude, neither connect with the two first, nor will help one to decipher them.

The difficult one:—

> Charades of all things are the worst,
> But yet my best have been my first.
> Who with my second are concern'd,
> Will to despise my whole have learn'd.

This sounds like a good one, and therefore I will not tell you my solution; for, if it is wrong, it might lead you astray; and if it is right, it would prove the charade is not a good one. Had I anything better, I would not send you charades, unless for the name of the author.

I have had a letter from your brother, who tells me that he has his grandson Stewart[1] with him, who is a prodigy. I say to myself,

> Prodigies are grown so frequent,
> That they have lost their name.

I have seen prodigies in plenty of late, ay, and formerly too; but divine as they have all been, each has had a mortal heel, and has trodden back a vast deal of their celestial path! I beg to be excused from any more credulity.

I am sorry you have lost your factotum Stokes. I suppose he had discovered that he was too necessary to you. Every day cures one of reliance on others; and we acquire a prodigious stock of experience, by the time that we shall cease to have occasion for any. Well! I am not clear but making or solving charades is as wise as anything we can do. I should pardon professed philosophers if they would

LETTER 2595.—[1] Afterwards well known as Lord Castlereagh: Robert (1769–1822), eldest son of Robert Stewart (afterwards Viscount Castlereagh and Marquis of Londonderry) by Lady Sarah Seymour Conway, second daughter of first Earl of Hertford. He was styled Viscount Castlereagh from 1796–1821, when he succeeded his father.

allow that their wisdom is only trifling, instead of calling their trifling wisdom. Adieu!

2596. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 4, 1786.

When I, in the heart of these populous villages, can glean so little worth repeating, I do not wonder, Madam, that Farming Woods are still less productive—and without events and news, or business, what idle, affected, and unnatural things are letters! I sent a postscript after mine, because I thought, as did happen, that the direction was wrong. Now I can only reply to a few paragraphs, and return thanks for the charades; but easy or difficult, I have solved neither: people without teeth can no more eat an apple than crack a nut. I did guess at the more mysterious one, and thought it might be a *spelling-book*, but that solution is so awkward, that I think the enigma would not be worthy of Mr. Fitzpatrick. For Mrs. West's[1] verses, I do not think I shall tap them. The milk-woman at Bristol has made me sick of mendicant poetesses. If deep distresses and poverty cannot sow gratitude in the human heart, nor balance vanity and jealousy, these slip-shod Muses must sing better than they do, before I will lend an ear to them. Miss Hannah More is the best of our numerous Calliopes; and her heart is worth all Pindus. Misses Seward and Williams[2], and half a dozen more of those harmonious virgins, have no imagination, no novelty. Their thoughts and phrases are like their gown, old remnants cut and turned.

Letter 2596.—[1] Jane West (1758–1852), wife of a yeoman farmer in Northamptonshire. She wrote novels and poems.

[2] Helen Maria Williams (1762–1827), whose *Poems* were published in 1786. She took up her residence in France in 1788, and made herself remarkable by the enthusiasm with which she wrote of the French Revolution.

Mr. Selwyn had a bad fever in Gloucestershire, but is recovered and returned to Richmond. My good old friend, Sir Horace, whom your Ladyship is so kind as to mention, was alive when the newspapers killed him. I scarce dare affirm that he is so now, as his excellent nephew, the younger Sir Horace, who posted to him on hearing of his danger, gives me small hopes of his lasting; but why should I hope it? He suffers, is eighty-five, and perfectly resigned to his fate!

It is being very fickle to go out of the fashion when the fashion adapts itself to me: yet except one day's lameness, and constant chalky rills from my fingers, I have had no gout this summer. If the Duchess of Devonshire has, and retains the diadem of fashion still (a long reign in so unstable a kingdom), I suppose the ladies of her court will recall their chins, and thrust out a shoe wadded with flannel. Then it will be an easy transition to the *Béquille du Père Barnabas*! I recommend the tune to Colonel Fitzpatrick.

Lord and Lady Waldegrave have been with me two or three days, and to-day have sent me a confirmation of several of Princess Amelie's[3] legacies as you have seen in the papers; but thus particularly:—

To Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline Waldegrave[4], each 4,000*l. in money.* This she told me, on Lady Waldegrave's death, she intended, and so she did to this Lord. To the two brothers of the Landgrave of Hesse 20,000*l.* apiece, and they are to be residuary legatees.

To Lady Anne Howard, 5,000*l.* To Lady Barrymore, 3,000*l.* To Lady Templetown[5], 2,000*l.* stock. To Lady

[3] The Princess Amelia Sophia Eleonora, the only survivor of the children of George II, died on Oct. 31, 1786, aged seventy-six.

[4] Daughters of third Earl Waldegrave. Lady Elizabeth married (1791) the fifth Earl of Cardigan.

[5] Elizabeth (d. 1823), daughter of Shuckburgh Boughton, of Poston Court, Herefordshire, and widow of Clotworthy Upton, first Baron Templetown. She was Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess.

Anne Noel the interest of 5,000*l.* for life. Small legacies to all her servants. To her executors, Lords Besborough and Pelham, 1,000*l.* stock. The jewels to the Duchess of Brunswick.

Gunnersbury and her house in town to be sold.

Lord Besborough not being well enough, and Lord Pelham not in town, Lord Duncannon went to the King to know if he chose to be present at the reading of the will, which he declined; but has since sent Lord Sydney to one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to ask if previous to her death she had expressed any wishes not inserted in her will, and to say he would fulfil whatever had been her desire. The Princess is to be buried this day se'nnight at the King's expense, and the mourning to commence the next day.

The will seems to me a proper and a kind one; and surely neither her life nor death deserved the infamous abuse of the newspapers, which is as false as the exaggeration of her wealth. History, I believe, seldom contains much truth; but should our daily lying chronicles exist and be consulted, the annals of these days will deserve as little credit as the *Arabian Nights*.

2597. To Lady Craven.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 27, 1786.

To my extreme surprise, Madam, when I knew not in what quarter of the known or unknown world you was resident or existent, my maid in Berkeley Square sent me to Strawberry Hill a note from your Ladyship, offering to call on me for a moment—for a whirlwind, I suppose, was waiting at your door to carry you to Japan; and, as balloons have not yet settled any post offices in the air, you could not, at least did not, give me any direction where to address you, though you did kindly reproach me with my silence. I

must enter into a little justification before I proceed. I heard from you from Venice, then from Poland, and then, having whisked through Tartary, from Petersburg; but still with no directions. I said to myself, 'I will write to Grand Cairo, which, probably, will be her next stage.' Nor was I totally in the wrong, for there came a letter from Constantinople, with a design mentioned of going to the Greek islands, and orders to write to you at Vienna; but with no banker or other address specified.

For a great while I had even stronger reasons than these for silence. For several months I was disabled by the gout from holding a pen; and you must know, Madam, that one can't write when one cannot write. Then, how write to *la Fiancée du Roi de Garbe*? You had been in the tent of the Cham of Tartary, and in the harem of the Captain Pacha, and, during your navigation of the Ægean, were possibly fallen into the terrible power of a corsair. How could I suppose that so many despotic infidels would part with your charms? I never expected you again on Christian ground. I did not doubt your having a talisman to make people in love with you; but anti-talismans are quite a new specific.

Well, while I was in this quandary, I received a delightful drawing of the castle of Otranto; but still provokingly without any address. However, my gratitude for so very agreeable and obliging a present could not rest till I found you out. I wrote to the Duchess of Richmond, to beg she would ask your brother Captain Berkeley for a direction to you; and he has this very day been so good as to send me one, and I do not lose a moment in making use of it.

I give your Ladyship a million of thanks for the drawing, which was really a very valuable gift to me. I did not even know that there was a castle of Otranto. When the story was finished, I looked into the map of the kingdom of

Naples for a well-sounding name, and that of Otranto was very sonorous. Nay, but the drawing is so satisfactory, that there are two small windows, one over another, and looking into the country, that suit exactly to the small chambers from one of which Matilda heard the young peasant singing beneath her. Judge how welcome this must be to the author; and thence judge, Madam, how much you must have obliged him!

When you take another flight towards the bounds of the western ocean, remember to leave a direction. One cannot always shoot flying. Lord Chesterfield directed a letter to the late Lord Pembroke, who was always swimming, 'To the Earl of Pembroke in the Thames, over against Whitehall.' That was sure of finding him within a certain number of fathom; but your Ladyship's longitude varies so rapidly, that one must be a good bowler indeed, to take one's ground so judiciously that by casting wide of the mark one may come in near to the jack.

I have the honour to be, with gratitude and respect,

Your Ladyship's most obliged humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2598. To Mrs. Delany.

Berkeley Square, London, Nov. 28, 1786.

MR. WALPOLE having been called upon for a new edition of the *Anecdotes of Painting*, could not in a *history of English arts* resist the agreeable occasion of doing justice to one who has *founded a new branch*[1]. He hopes therefore that

LETTER 2598.—Not in C.; reprinted from Mrs. Delany's *Correspondence*, vol. vi. p. 416.

[1] Walpole speaks of Mrs. Delany as 'a lady of excellent sense and taste, a paintress in oil, and who, at the age of seventy-five, invented the art of paper mosaic, with which material coloured, she, in eight years, executed within twenty of a thousand various flowers and flowering shrubs, with a precision and truth unparalleled.'

Mrs. Delany will forgive the liberty he has taken of recording her name in vol. 2, p. 242, and that she will please to consider how cruel it would have been for him to be denied the satisfaction of mentioning her only because he has the honour and happiness of her acquaintance.

2599. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 1, 1786.

Oh yes, Madam, I am ready to continue playing at questions and commands, if you please, since you are content with such answers as I, simple man, can send you. I have no character to sustain, and don't care a straw how silly my letters are, if you find they fill up some of your idle moments. I am sure I have nothing better to do, and it was for your sake that I proposed *passing eldest.*

No, I am not at all struck with the letter[1] of Beaumarchais, except with its insolence. Such a reproof might become Cato the Censor, in defence of such a tragedy as Addison's, on his descendant: but for such a *vaurien* as Beaumarchais, and for such a contemptible farce as *Figaro*, it was paramount impertinence towards the Duke, and gross ill-breeding towards the ladies. Besides, I abhor vanity in authors; it would offend in Milton or Montesquieu; in a Jack-pudding it is intolerable. I know no trait of arrogance

(*Works*, vol. iii. p. 259, note.) Many of Mrs. Delany's flower mosaics are now in the British Museum.

Letter 2599.—[1] 'Réponse de M. de Beaumarchais à M. le Duc de Villequier, qui lui demandait sa petite loge pour des femmes qui voulaient voir *Figaro* sans être vues.

'Je n'ai nulle considération, M. le Duc, pour des femmes qui se permettent de voir un spectacle qu'elles jugent malhonnête, pourvu qu'elles le voient en secret; je ne me prête point à de pareilles fantaisies. J'ai donné ma pièce au public pour l'amuser et non pour l'instruire, non pour offrir à des bégueules mitigées le plaisir d'en aller penser du bien en petite loge à condition d'en dire du mal en société. Les plaisirs du vice et les honneurs de la vertu, telle est la pruderie du siècle. Ma pièce n'est point un ouvrage équivoque, il faut l'avouer ou la fuir. Je vous salue, M. le Duc, et je garde ma loge.' (Grimm, *Corr. Litt.* vol. xii. p. 117.)

recorded of Molière – and to talk of the *Marriage of Figaro* as *instructive*! Punch might as well pretend to be moralizing when he sells a bargain. In general, the modern *gens de lettres* in France, as they call themselves, are complete puppies. They have beaten up their native pertness with the brutality of the ancient philosophers, and would erect themselves into a tribunal of dictators: they lay down laws impertinently, and employ affronts and insults as penalties. The *litterati*, on the revival of learning, were less intolerable, for they only threw dirt, and called names in coarse Latin, which nobody but a Roman scavenger could have understood. The present fry are saucy, and quaint, and distorted, and void of all simplicity. What a forced affected phrase is *bégueules mitigées*!

The history of Lactilla[2] of Bristol is worse; she is a *bégueule* not *mitigée*. Her ingratitude to Miss More has been superlative. The latter laboured unweariedly to collect subscriptions for her, and was at expense herself for the publication; and lest the husband, who is a dolt, should waste the sum collected, placed it out at interest for her as trustee, besides having washed and combed her trumpery verses, and taught them to dance in tune. The foolish woman's head, turned with this change of fortune and applause, and concluding that her talent, which was only wonderful from her sphere and state of ignorance, was marvellous genius, she grew enraged at Miss More for presuming to prune her wild shoots, and, in her passion, accused her benevolent and beneficent friend of defrauding her of part of the collected charity. In short, she has abused Miss More grossly, has written a volume of scurrility against her, and is really to be pitied, as she is grown extravagant and ostentatious. Am I in the wrong, Madam, for thinking that these parish Sapphos had better be bound

[2] Mrs. Yearsley.

'prentices to mantua-makers, than be appointed chamber-maids to Mesdemoiselles the Muses?

I am sorry the knight of the brush has also now and then some human delinquencies—but alas! everybody has a heel or a finger not dipped in Styx—or rather, I think we should say, that has been dipped in Styx. I went t'other day, when I was in town, to see the Sacraments of Poussin that he has purchased from Rome for the Duke of Rutland. I remember when I saw them there, a thousand years ago, that I was not much enchanted. I rather like them better now than I expected, at least two or three of them—but they are really only coloured bas-reliefs, and old Romans don't make good Christians. There are two of Baptism; Sir Joshua said, What could he mean by painting two? I said, I concluded the second was Anabaptism. Sir Joshua himself has bought a profile of Oliver Cromwell, which he thinks the finest miniature by Cooper he ever saw. But all his own geese are swans, as the swans of others are geese. It is most clearly a copy, and not a very good one; the outline very hard, the hair and armour very flat and tame. He would not show me his Russian Hercules[3]. I fancy he has discovered that he was too sanguine about the commission, as you say.

The town was ringing about your old neighbour of the north, Countess Strathmore[4], and the enormous barbarities of her husband, who beat her for six days and nights

Round Stainmore's wintry wild,

[3] The Infant Hercules, painted as a commission from the Empress of Russia.

[4] Lady Strathmore was separated from her husband, Mr. Bowes. On Nov. 10, 1786, on pretence of a warrant from Lord Mansfield, he carried her off to his house in the county of Durham. Here, on her refusal to preside over the household, he beat and ill-used her. After being removed from place to place in the custody of her husband (whose conduct had roused the indignation of the country people) Lady Strathmore was rescued from him by a constable and came to London.

for which the myrmidons of the King's Bench have knocked his brains out—almost. This, and Lady Cathcart's[5] long imprisonment, ought to make wealthy widows a little cautious of M'Philanders—but the Lord knows whether it will.

Lord Chewton is perfectly well. He was here lately with his parents. Soon after my neighbour, Sir Robert Goodere, made me a visit, and said he had been a little doubtful whether he might come, as he heard the Princess Elizabeth[6] was to come to Strawberry Hill for the air. 'Heavens! Sir Robert! what can you mean? Princess Elizabeth with me? you must dream, or imagine that Princess Elizabeth Luttrell[7] is with me.' At last I found out that he had seen Lord Waldegrave's servants in the Queen's livery[8] here, and the rest was the product of his own reasoning upon that phenomenon. Such is the birth of half the stories circulated; and had he communicated his conjecture to the village before I set him right, in three days that vision would have been in the newspapers.

I went yesterday to see the Duke of Queensberry's palace at Richmond, under the conduct of George Selwyn, the *concierge*. You cannot imagine how noble it looks now all the Cornbury pictures from Amesbury are hung up there. The great hall, the great gallery, the eating-room, and the corridor, are covered with whole and half-lengths of royal family, favourites, ministers, peers, and judges, of the reign of Charles I—not one an original, I think, at least not one

[5] Elizabeth Malyn, Baroness Cathcart. She was twice married before her marriage to Lord Cathcart, after whose death she became the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Maguire, who is supposed to have kept her for some years a prisoner in Ireland. Her captivity suggested the subject of part of Miss Edgeworth's novel, *Castle Rackrent*. She died in 1789, aged ninety-eight.

[6] Third daughter of George III. She married the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg in 1818 and died in 1840.

[7] Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, daughter of first Earl of Carhampton and sister of the Duchess of Cumberland.

[8] Lord Waldegrave was Master of the Horse to the Queen.

fine, yet altogether they look very respectable; and the house is so handsome, and the views so rich, and the day was so fine, that I could only have been more pleased if (for half an hour) I could have seen the real palace that once stood on that spot, and the persons represented walking about!—A visionary holiday in old age, though it has not the rapture of youth, is a sedate enjoyment that is more sensible because one attends to it and reflects upon it at the time; and as new tumults do not succeed, the taste remains long in one's memory's mouth.

P.S. I was told t'other night that Lady Cathcart, who is still living, danced lately at Hertford, to show her vigour at past fourscore—ware an Abbé de Gedoyn[9]! She would risk another incarceration;—it is woful to have a colt's tooth when folks have no other left!

2600. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 12, 1786.

I pretend to neither judgement nor taste, Madam, and I am sure I am in the wrong when I dislike what Lady Ravensworth, Lord Ossory, and Mr. Fitzpatrick approve: and yet, instead of condemning contrary to my opinion, I rather doubt whether your Ladyship does not commend more than you think the letter deserves, for your unalterable good humour makes you always set everything in the best light possible. *Modified brimstones*, I own, did sound to me too harsh an expression to be used of women of quality, in a country that piques itself on being the standard of good breeding; but one every day learns to correct one's

[9] Nicolas Gédoyn (1667–1744), with whom Ninon de Lenclos was reported to have fallen in love when eighty years old.

original ideas, which are generally the fruits of ignorance. I imagined that the ladies scarce gave as a reason for asking for Beaumarchais's box, that they supposed his play was indecent—at least I know that that is not the object of *loges grillées*, nor could be for this plain reason, that the French stage does not allow of indecencies. *Des loges grillées*, I believe, are for the purpose of going undressed, and are used at all the chastest old plays. I know I have been in one at a tragedy with Mesdames de Luxembourg and du Deffand; and therefore I was naturally enough led into the mistake of thinking that Beaumarchais had given himself an impertinent air on a very common occasion. If his farce was reckoned indelicate, it was he that had offended the custom, not the ladies; *mais peut-être qu'on a changé tout cela*; and the austere Beaumarchais, like stern Lycurgus, may insist on ladies descending stark naked into the arena, and wrestling with gladiators, to show that genuine modesty does not wear a mask.

When I have said thus much, I know how much I am guided by prejudices: I have an aversion to the dictatorial pertness of the modern French authors, and cannot conceive that their very flimsy talents can entitle them to an importance that would mis-become Racine himself. In truth, except for such a predominant genius as Shakespeare or Milton, I hold authors cheap enough: what merit is there in pains, and study, and application, compared with the extempore abilities of such men as Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, or Mr. Pitt? What puerile matters are the Orations of Cicero, composed, corrected, and re-written at fifty or sixty years of age, in comparison of what start and flow and overflow from our prodigies, the moment they are men? It is from being so proud of my countrymen that I betrayed so much contempt of the frogs of the French Hippocrene, and I hope I have a little disculpated myself for the

disrespect I showed to what your Ladyship liked, and was so good as to send me.

I came to town the middle of last week, to quit the damps that made me much out of order, but the smoke of London soon recovered me. I dined with the Duchess of Bedford on Sunday, as she was to have no company but the two Misses Pelham, Miss Lloyd, and Admiral Pigot[1]; yet though three Misses sound very young, your Ladyship is sensible it was not a very callow party. I shall be more juvenile to-night, for I am going to Mrs. Cowley's[2] new play, which I suppose is as *instructive* as the *Marriage of Figaro*, for I am told it approaches to those of Mrs. Behn in Spartan delicacy; but I shall see Miss Farren[3], who, in my poor opinion, is the first of all actresses.

Of news I have not heard a tittle since I arrived. To give them their due, the houses in London are of themselves as quiet, good sort of houses as any in the universe, and it is only when they are brimful that they produce so many strange scenes every day.

2601. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 15, 1786.

Instead of being too prolix, I think you are very condescending, Madam, to enter into my cavils and discuss them with me; but you are not so gracious when you suspect my *douceurs* of irony, which would reduce me to weigh my words, and then I should have no satisfaction

Letter 2600. — [1] Brother of the better known Lord Pigot. He died in 1792.

[2] Hannah Cowley (1743–1809), daughter of a bookseller in Tiverton, and wife of a Captain in the service of the East India Company. Her play, *A School for Greybeards*, was borrowed from one of Mrs. Behn's.

[3] Eliza Farren, who first appeared on the London stage in 1777. She retired in 1797 on her marriage to the twelfth Earl of Derby. He had been attached to her for some years during the lifetime of his first wife, from whom he was separated.

in chatting with you. I set down the first thing that comes into my head, foolish or not; for instance, the moment I had written the last paragraph of my last, I knew it was silly, but I could not take the trouble of writing my letter again; and, in truth, I have a little partiality for nonsense. We are so much in the dark about most things, that when we attempt to reason, we often fall into great absurdities; but giving the reins to nonsense, it is heads or tails whether we do not light upon sense.

Antigallican I was literally when I found fault with Beaumarchais's epistle, but not politically so, God knows, nor in a fury. At past sixty-nine my tow and tinder are pretty well exhausted, and I should be ashamed to go out of the world in a fury about anything. About the commercial treaty[1] it is impossible I should be in one, for it is most strictly true that I have not read a single article, and for this plain reason, that I should not understand a syllable of it. I understand trade no more than I do Coptic, and being much disposed to amuse myself for the little time I have left, I waste none of it on what I do not comprehend. Many years ago a person, who was never sorry to tell me my truths, said to me, 'You understand several out of the way things, but you know nothing that is common or useful.' This was true then, and alas! is so to this hour, and will continue so for a few more; and therefore, good

LETTER 2601.—[1] Pitt's Commercial Treaty with France was signed in Sept. 1786. 'It was to continue in force for twelve years. It established between the two countries complete liberty of navigation and of commerce in all articles that were not specifically excepted, admitted the wines of France into England at the same duties hitherto paid by those of Portugal, reduced the duties on a long list of the principal articles of both countries, and provided that all goods not specified were to pay only such duties as were paid by the most favoured nation. . . . Privateers belonging to any prince at war with one of the contracting parties might no longer equip themselves or sell their prizes in the ports of the other, and the religious worship, property, and personal freedom of the inhabitants of each country when residing in the other were carefully guaranteed.' (Lecky, *Hist. Cent. XVIII*, vol. v. p. 308.)

or bad, the commercial treaty could have no share in my censure of the letter, nor will occasion a wrinkle on the surface of my thoughts. All I can say on the subject is, that the treaty being good, he must be a bad Whig that is angry at it, let who will have made it.

I know nothing of the milkwoman's new edition, and certainly shall not send for it. When people disappoint me and prove very worthless, I have done with them, and suppose they don't exist.

The Greybeards have certainly been chastised, for we did not find them at all gross. The piece is farcical and improbable, but has some good things, and is admirably acted. *Cœur de Lion* did not answer; nor was I much charmed with the music; but my ear is too bad to judge at first hearing. The scenes are excellent; Mrs. Jordan is quite out of her character, and makes nothing of the part; and the turning the ferocious Richard into a tender husband is intolerable. If an historic subject is good but wants alteration, why will not an author take the canvas, cut it to his mind, but give new names to the personages? It only makes a confusion in one's ideas, to maim a known story.

You guessed rightly, Madam: I certainly should have been distracted to have risked my letters to Sir Horace being printed. Though I could not write very freely through the gutters of so many post offices, I did not desire Europe should see what I thought of its sovereigns, who were chiefly our *dramatis personae*. Sir Horace the nephew brought away my letters at different times; and as he was there at his dear uncle's death he will secure the rest, which are not a dozen.

For the new edition of Shakespeare[2], it did not at all captivate me. In the first place I did not subscribe for

[2] Boydell's proposed series of prints after paintings by British artists, illustrative of Shakespeare.

my heirs and executors as it would have been, when the term of completion is twelve years hence; but I am not favourable to sets of prints for authors. I scarce know above one well executed, Coypell's *Don Quixote*[3], but mercy on us! *Our* painters to design for *Shakespeare*! His commentators have not been more inadequate. Pray, who is to give an idea of Falstaff now Quin is dead? And then Bartolozzi, who is only fit to engrave for the *Pastor fido*, will be to give a pretty enamelled fan-mount of Macbeth! Salvator Rosa might, and Piranesi might dash out Duncan's castle; but Lord help Alderman Boydell and the Royal Academy!

Lord Macartney I have seen twice; he is quite well. I was at Lady Macartney's last night: I told them of your Ladyship's inquiries. They have got a charming house in Curzon Street, and cheap as old clothes. It was Lord Carteret's, and all antiqued and grotesqued by Adam, with an additional room in the court fourscore feet long, then dedicated to orgies and now to books.

Thus I have answered all your Ladyship's questions *tant bien que mal*; and now after telling you a short story, will take my leave.

Lady Louvain[4] wished to see Mademoiselle D'Éon, and Mr. Dutens invited her. The Lady asked her if she had ever been at Dijon, and said she herself had lain in there. 'I have been there,' said Miss Hector, 'but did not lie in there, car je suis vierge, et pour que les vierges accouchent, il faut qu'elles aillent à Jérusalem.' It was impertinent to Lady Louvain, and worse in a clergyman's house; but women of fashion should not go aboard Amazons.

[3] *Estampes de l'Histoire de Don Quichotte de la Manche, peintes par Coypel, gravées en* 25 *feuilles.* Paris, 1753.

[4] Previously mentioned as Lady Algernon Percy. Her husband succeeded to the barony of Lovaine on his father's death in June 1786, and was created Earl of Beverley in 1790. Mr. Dutens had been Lord Lovaine's tutor.

2602. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 22, 1786.

Your Ladyship is so apt to refine, that give me leave to say, your penetration sometimes a little overshoots itself. You tell me that Lord Ossory says you *must* believe that I have not read the commercial treaty, which rather implies that you were not so disposed. Now I do not see what credit was to result to me from not having read it. Most people would think that I ought to have examined a matter of national importance; and few men perhaps would have owned so frankly, that my reason for not reading it was that I could not understand it. Yet so the whole fact was; and though I think it less despicable to affect ignorance than to pretend to know what one does not, there was not a grain of affectation or untruth in the case. I have lived too long not to despise art which is the *filigraine* of a little mind; and were I to grow cunning now, I should probably be under ground before my *finesse* could achieve any *tour* of legerdemain.

Had you been content with less shrewdness, Madam, you would not have slid into another error; you saw that I had first written *family* for *academy*, as was very plain I had—and then you concluded that I had substituted the latter word out of prudence, for it seems that in your Ladyship's eyes I am grown all on a sudden a miracle of circumspection. But had you considered a moment you would have seen that it was impossible I could ever have meant to write *family*, and that my pen, by inattention, must have written *royal family*, from the greater familiarity of the phrase; for, I beseech you, are the *royal family* to design the prints for Shakespeare? With all my respect for nonsense, I never meant to write one word for another which

would not be too foolish but drunk; and I must have swallowed two bottles before I could lament that the royal family were incapable of giving a just drawing of Macbeth. I might as well have said that I did not read the treaty because Mrs. Siddons had negotiated it.

You will perhaps, Madam, discover some close policy, when I tell you that I have not even seen the new volume of Lord Clarendon's Papers; yet it is what I must say, if I answer you with truth. Nay, I even never did look into the former volume. I was tired of those times before they appeared. I had read and written as much as I chose about my Lord Clarendon, and did not care to return to the subject. Mere personal amusement is all I seek now, and I would sooner return to Mother Goose's Tales than to the gravity of the former century. Gout, and pain, and confinement have made me hate everything serious, and I try to paint all my thoughts *couleur de rose*, which is *my* philosophy.

I am not surprised that there should be a great party for the milkwoman. The wise people of Bristol have taken it into their heads that they have a manufacture of original genius *chez eux*, and the less foundation they have for their credulity, the stronger their faith is, as always is the case of fools. Great was the Diana of the Ephesians, though they made the image themselves. If Lactilla puts gin into her milk and kills herself, she will be immortal, and Mr. Hayley and Mr. Cumberland will write hymns to her—with all my heart.

Lady Anne's good sense and just observations are not only doubly hereditary, but the consequence of the very rational education you give her, Madam. Truth is natural to youth, and I believe would produce a good portion of sense too, if they did not hear and see so much falsehood, as they find by degrees, in the commerce of the world;

and which they receive with respect, because it comes from elder persons, who they conclude act rightly. People are afraid of trusting the indiscretion of their children, and do not tell them, Such a gentleman is a rascal, Such an one a fool—nay, I can recollect having believed that several persons were sensible, because I heard others say they were so; and I had not then learnt to ask silently the leading question,—'How do *you* know whether they are sensible or not?' Lady Anne seems to do so already, and, therefore, will not easily be a dupe. Commonly we have not a stock of experience, till it is of little or no use. We want it most when we are coming *into* the world. Sages, who are proud of it when they do not want it, are sometimes so generous as to bequeath their hoard to posterity—and posterity value it no more than a mourning ring.

I have lost another old acquaintance, Lady Beaulieu[1]. As there are not above half a dozen persons left now who were on the stage to my knowledge when I became a spectator, I should be weak indeed if I interested myself much in what happens on a theatre where the principal actors are twenty, thirty, or forty years younger than I am. My old remembrancer, the gout, who never lets me forget myself long, is come, since I wrote the former part of this last night, into my left hand, and I must suspend my manœuvres, I suppose, for some weeks, for he seldom makes his visit superficially, so I can only be a *visitée*; and the weather is so sharp that I am not sorry to remain in my own chimney-corner.

LETTER 2602.—[1] Isabella Montagu, Countess of Beaulieu, formerly Duchess of Manchester, the heroine of Hanbury Williams's poem *Isabella, or the Morning*.

2603. To Miss Hannah More.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 1, 1787.

Do not imagine, dear Madam, that I pretend in the most distant manner to pay you for charming poetry with insipid prose; much less that I acquit a debt of gratitude for flattering kindness and friendship by a meagre tale that does not even aim at celebrating you. No; I have but two motives for offering you the accompanying trifle[1]: the first, to prove that the moment I have finished anything, *you* are of the earliest in my thoughts: the second, that, coming from my press, I wish it may be added to your Strawberry editions. It is so far from being designed for the public, that I have printed but forty copies; which I do not mention to raise its value, though it will with mere collectors, but lest you should lend it and lose it, when I may not be able to supply its place.

Christina[2], indeed, has some title to connection with you, both from her learning and her moral writings; as you are justly entitled to a lodging in her *Cité des Dames*, where, I am sure, her three patronesses[3] would place you, as a favourite *élève* of some of their still more amiable sisters, who must at this moment be condoling with their unfortunate sister Gratitude, whose vagabond foundling has so basely disgraced her and herself. You fancied that Mrs. Yearsley was a spurious issue of a Muse; and to be sure, with all their immortal virginity, the parish of Parnassus has been sadly charged with their bantlings; and, as nobody knows the fathers, no wonder some of the misses have turned out woful reprobates!

Letter 2603.—[1] See the *Postscript to Royal and Noble Authors*, *Works*, vol. i. pp. 553–61.

[2] Christine de Pisan.

[3] Reason, Justice, and Rectitude, who are represented as appearing to Christine de Pisan, in an illumination in the library of the King of France. A print from this drawing is given in Walpole's *Works*, vol. i. p. 288.

I was very unlucky in not calling at Mrs. Vesey's the evening you was there for a moment; but I hope for better fortune soon, and will be much obliged to you if you will tell me when I may hope for that pleasure.

Your most grateful and faithful humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2604. To LADY CRAVEN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 2, 1787.

YOUR Ladyship tells me that you have kept a journal of your travels: you know not when your friends at Paris will give you time to put it *au net*: that is, I conclude and hope, prepare it for the press. I do not wonder that those friends, whether talismanic or others, are so assiduous, if you indulge them: but, unless they are of the former description, they are unpardonable, if they know what they interrupt; and deserve much more that you should wish they had fallen into a ditch, than the poor gentlemen who sigh more to see you in sheets of holland than of paper. To me the mischief is enormous. How proud I should be to register a noble authoress of my own country, who has travelled over more regions and farther than any female in print! Your Ladyship has visited those islands and shores whence formerly issued those travelling sages and legislators who sought and imported wisdom, laws, and religion into Greece; and though we are so perfect as to want none of those commodities, the fame of those philosophers is certainly diminished when a fair lady has gone as far in quest of knowledge. You have gone in an age when travels are brought to a juster standard, by narrations being limited to truth.

Formerly, the performers of the longest voyages destroyed half the merit of their expeditions by relating, not what

they had, but had *not* seen; a sort of communication that they might have imparted without stirring a foot from home. Such exaggerations drew discredit on travels, till people would not believe that there existed in other countries anything very different from what they saw in their own; and because no Patagonians, or gentry seven or eight feet high, were really discovered, they would not believe that there were Laplanders or pigmies of three and four. Incredulity went so far, that at last it was doubted whether China so much as existed; and our countryman Sir John Mandeville got an ill name, because, though he gave an account of it, he had not brought back its right name: at least, if I do not mistake, this was the case; but it is long since I read anything about the matter, and I am willing to begin my travels again under your Ladyship's auspices.

I am sorry to hear, Madam, that by your account Lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. The invaluable art of inoculation, which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe, perhaps, the preservation of yours, stamps her an universal benefactress; and as you rival her in poetic talents, I had rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum, than detect her for romancing. However, genuine accounts of the interior of seraglios would be precious; and I was in hopes would become the greater rarities, as I flattered myself that your friends the Empress of Russia and the Emperor were determined to level Ottoman tyranny. His Imperial Majesty, who has demolished the prison bars of so many nunneries, would perform a still more Christian act in setting free so many useless sultanas; and her Czarish Majesty, I trust, would be as great a benefactress to our sex by abolishing the barbarous practice that reduces us to be of none. Your

Ladyship's indefatigable peregrinations should have such great objects in view, when you have the ear of sovereigns.

Peter the Hermit conjured up the first crusadoes against the infidels by running about from monarch to monarch. Lady Craven should be as zealous and as renowned; and every fair Circassian would acknowledge, that one English lady had repaid their country for the secret which another had given to Europe from their practice.

I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2605. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 9, 1787.

THE post is come in so late (past three) and I am forced to dine so early, Madam, that I could say but a few words, were I able; but I have been out, leaving my name, by way of airing, at doors of how d'yes, and it tired me so much, that I was forced to leave half upon my conscience and come home to rest till another day. However, I am recovered of my gout, have been abroad three evenings, and wish myself much joy of far the shortest fit I have had these twenty years (only for a fortnight), so that if I live another century I may hope to have worn out the mines of chalk, and to be very healthy and robust too.

I must not only thank your Ladyship for your most obliging inquiry, but for your great condescension in making unnecessary apologies. It was indeed my head was hurt at a *soupçon* of untruth, not my heart, which can only be answerable to itself; but on the verge of seventy I should be liable to the imputation of dotage if I were grown either affected or artful—what! make the undertaker laugh at me!

I am charmed with your theatre, and only wish I could be a spectator. I extremely approve your good humour in dancing and acting, for I should hate gravity, dignity, or austerity in one's own house in the country. Who had not rather see Scipio playing at leap-frog with his children at his Ampthill, than parading to St. Paul's to sing 'Te Deum'? Would to the Muses, too, that I were capable of being your poet epilogate! not that I would if I could, when you have the best epilogue as well as prologue-maker in the whole county of Parnassus at your elbow. How the deuce, Madam, should I fifty years ago have been able to write an epilogue worthy of waiting on a prologue of Mr. Fitzpatrick? I am foolhardy enough when I send you a dab of prose, and yet I would not venture that, if it were not a curiosity, that is, almost a *true* novel; at least, I have not, as you will find, attempted to add one romantic circumstance, rather the contrary. The little French ditty, *said* to be written by an English Earl[1], I am sure will please you for its tender simplicity.

I have printed but forty copies, and merely for presents, which I only mention from my ambition that Lord Ossory may have a complete set of my editions; and as I have appropriated all the rest, I shall not have another copy but my own left.

I must finish for every reason, *as per above*, and am the most obedient servant of the whole *dramatis personae*.

2606. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 21, 1787.

Your Ladyship's letter followed me hither, and I give you many thanks for complying with my suit for the epilogue, which was very proper for the occasion, simple

Letter 2605.—[1] John Montacute, Earl of Salisbury.

and unaffected. In fact, those overtures and adieus are very difficult, especially when the pieces are not new; nor can I in general approve them. If a prologue, like the contents prefixed to cantos of a poem, opens the plot, it anticipates it. If it does not, why is it there? An epilogue is essentially as useless: will people have liked a play, if they have not liked it? though the poet begs they will have done so, or thanks them though they have not. Dryden talked politics or controversy, or of anything passing in town, in *his* prefaces and postfaces. Addison and classic authors talked of Sophocles and Euripides, in their prologues and in their epilogues, as if the whole audience were to sup at the Rose Tavern[1]. Garrick's essays were like medley overtures, drew characters of different classes, which diverted the pit and galleries, answered his purpose, showed his mimicry, and will not do without it.

In short, prologues seem never to have been necessary but to Shakespeare, whose plays, often comprehending half a century and half Europe, it was impossible for the spectators to conceive at once, from the mere shifting of the decoration (or from not shifting it, as was a little the case in his time), that the actors were one moment in the street at Venice, and the next in a bedchamber in Cyprus. But I did not mean to write a dissertation, and shall leave the practice to the will of the world, to be continued or omitted as it pleases; which I believe is the wisest way in most things, when one's opinion does not sail with the current. I dip so little in that tide, that I did not know of Mr. Crawfurd's new passion: I have seen him but once these six weeks.

Lord Waldegrave has taken, for six months, the ready-furnished house in Dover Street, over against Lord Ashburn-

LETTER 2606.—[1] In Russell Street, Covent Garden.

ham's, which is very agreeable to me, as being so near me. I saw them on the eve of the Birthday.

Lord Carmarthen's dinner answered the expectation of nobody; except Mr. Fox, General Conway, and Lord Macartney, I think there was nobody but foreign ministers. Though his list of invitations was as promiscuous as the company that Noah carried into the ark, the pairs were not quite so well sorted. The Marquis and Earl of Buckingham would not have been a very loving couple. In truth, I thought the whole congregation, had it met, would have been so distressed and awkward, that it would have been like a dinner that the late Duke of Montagu made at Bath, of all the people he could find there that stuttered. The three that did go were the fittest in the world for a heterogeneous mixture: Mr. Fox and Lord Macartney are easy with anybody; and Mr. Conway never knows with whom he is, nor perceives there is anything political or uncouth amongst any set of people. He had forgotten the dinner the next day, till I asked him about it.

Are not you sorry, Madam, that the King of Prussia's bigamy is not true? It diverted me exceedingly; it would have been quite new to have three queens at once—one that is not his wife, one that is, and one that cannot be. I fear, too, that the Prince of Anhalt is not so complete a courtier as was reported; it was said that, in compliment to his sovereign, he had doubled his matrimony too. Kings should strike novel strokes: *they* can give a fillip to the world, and turn it out of its old humdrum ways. Nobody minds individuals; the Duchess of Kingston and Mr. Madan aimed in vain at introducing polygamy; but when Solomon countenanced it, the Queen of Sheba went to admire his wisdom; and I dare to say at her return had as many husbands as his Hebrew majesty had wives; she never went so far on mere speculation.

2607. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 1, 1787.

Though you announced Lord Ossory, Madam, I did not expect to see him so soon as the next day, when he was so good as to call on me. His appearance prevented my immediate reply, as he can now shoot news flying, and I only gather up a few scattered feathers; and at present have not picked up one *pen* feather, nor should write but to explain the ballad you wot of, and which I never saw in its own person, though I know its birth and parentage, ay, its father and mother.

It was written by the late Lord Melcombe, on a Mrs. Strawbridge, whom I knew, and who was still a very handsome black woman; she lived at the corner house going to Saville Row, over against the late Duke of Grafton's. The Lord, then Mr. Dodington, fancied himself in love with her, and one day obtained an assignation. He found her lying on a couch. But, whether he had not expected so kind a reception, or was not so impatient to precipitate the conclusion of the romance, he kneeled down, and seizing her hand, cried, 'Oh, that I had you but in a wood!'—'In a wood,' cried the astonished Statira; 'what would you do—rob me?' However, then, or afterwards, that interlude produced an arrangement, and he gave her a bond of ten thousand pounds to be paid if he married anybody else. He did marry Mrs. Behan, with whom he could not own his marriage till Mrs. Strawbridge died.

As I cannot precisely ascertain the date of the ballad, I am not sure that *Mrs. Masham* was the famous *Lady Masham*, though perhaps it was, as, by the mention of the Kit-Kats, it was probably written in Queen Anne's time, when her Majesty's favour might have stamped that gentle-

woman for a beauty. *The little Whig* was most certainly the beautiful Lady Sunderland[1], the Duke of Marlborough's daughter. There never was but one Duchess of Shrewsbury, the Italian, mentioned in Lady Mary Wortley's first pastoral[2]; and there never was a Duke of Beaufort that made it worth knowing which Duke it was. Who the witty Sir Harry was, it is impossible to guess now: it might be the wittiest Sir Harry then alive, or the foolishest —for the expression rather seems ironic.

The pamphlet I have read, Madam; but cannot tell you what would have been my opinion of it, because my opinion was influenced before I saw it. A lady-politician ordered me to read it and to admire it, as the *chef-d'œuvre* of truth, eloquence, wit, argument, and impartiality; and she assured me that the *reasonings* in it were unanswerable. I believe she meant the *assertions*, for I know she uses those words as synonymous. I promised to obey her, as I am sure that ladies understand politics better than I do, and I hold it as a rule of faith—

> That all that they admire is sweet,
> And all is sense that they repeat.

How much ready wit they have! I can give you an instance, Madam, that I heard last night. After the late execution of the *eighteen* malefactors, a female was hawking an account of them, but called them *nineteen*. A gentleman said to her, 'Why do you say *nineteen*? there were but *eighteen* hanged.' She replied, 'Sir, I did not know *you* had been reprieved.'

The Letters of Henry VI's reign, &c.[3], are come out, and

LETTER 2607. — [1] Lady Anne Churchill, second daughter of the Duke, and wife of Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland. She died in 1716.

[2] The first of the *Town Eclogues*, called *Roxana, or the Drawing Room*, in which the Duchess is mentioned as 'Coquetilla.'

[3] *The Paston Letters*, of which two

to me make all other letters not worth reading. I have gone through above one volume, and cannot bear to be writing when I am so eager to be reading. There is one of *Sir John Falstaff*[4], in which he leaves his enemies to *White Beard* or *Black Beard*, that is, says he, to God or the devil.

There are letters from *all* my acquaintance, Lord Rivers, Lord Hastings, the Earl of Warwick, whom I remember still better than Mrs. Strawbridge, though she died within these fifty years. What antiquary would be answering a letter from a living Countess, when he may read one from Eleanor Mowbray, Duchess of Norfolk!

2608. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 9, 1787.

Though I sigh for your Ladyship's coming to town, I do not know whether I shall not be a loser, for what news don't you send me? That Lord Salisbury is a poet is nothing to your intelligence that *I* am going to turn player; nay, perhaps I should, if I were not too young for the company!—You tell me, too, that I snub and sneer; I protest, I thought I was the snubbee.

For *The Way to Keep Him*, I did not imagine it would come to anything, and so it has proved. However, I was enjoined secrecy, and, though I knew it could not remain a secret, I did not choose to be the reporter: I should have been a very premature one, for the *dramatis personae* were not filled by two or three; one of the principal actresses has already declined—and there is an end of it.

volumes had appeared under the title *Original Letters written during the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, Richard III, and Henry VII, by various persons of rank and consequence, and by members of the Paston Family.*

[4] Sir John Fastolf, K.G. (d. 1459), military commander.

For sneering, Lord help me! I was as guiltless. Every day I meet with red-hot politicians in petticoats, and told your Ladyship how I had been schooled by one of them, and how docile I was. If you yourself have any zeal for making converts, I should be very ready to be a proselyte, if I could get anything by it. It is very creditable, honourable, and fashionable; but, alas, I am so insignificant that I fear nobody would buy me; and one should look sillily to put oneself up to sale and not find a purchaser.

In short, I doubt I shall never make my fortune by turning courtier or comedian; and therefore I may as well adhere to my old principles, as I have always done, since you yourself, Madam, would not be flattered in a convert that nobody would take off your hands. If you could bring over Mr. Sheridan, he would do something: he talked for five hours and a half on Wednesday, and turned everybody's head. One heard everybody in the streets raving on the wonders of that speech; for my part, I cannot believe it was so supernatural as they say—do you believe it was, Madam? I will go to my oracle, who told me of the marvels of the pamphlet, which assures us that Mr. Hastings is a prodigy of virtue and abilities; and, as you think so too, how should such a fellow as Sheridan, who has no diamonds to bestow, fascinate all the world?—Yet witchcraft, no doubt, there has been, for when did simple eloquence ever convince a majority? Mr. Pitt and 174 other persons found Mr. Hastings guilty last night, and only sixty-eight remained thinking with *the pamphlet* and your Ladyship, that he is as white as snow. Well, at least there is a new crime, sorcery, to charge on the opposition! and, till they are cleared of that charge, I will never say a word in their favour nor think on politics more, which I would not have mentioned but in answer to your Ladyship's questions; and therefore I hope we shall drop the

subject and meet soon in Grosvenor Place in a perfect neutrality of good humour.

2609. To the Earl of Buchan.

My Lord, Berkeley Square, Feb. 11, 1787.

Though my fingers lamed anew by a recent fit of the gout make it not very pleasant to me to write, I must thank your Lordship for the honour of your letter, and for the description of your Abbey[1], which, as far as words can convey an idea of situation, seems to me to be a most pleasing one, and to me it is very natural to admire your Lordship's piety in adhering to the ancient style of the religious mansion.

Cunningham's History[2] I have not seen advertised yet, and consequently have it not. I fear there are castrations, which will destroy the chief satisfaction in it. For the Latin text, I must own I am not eager, as I by no means admire either modern Latin or modern history written in Latin, and should most certainly prefer the translation.

Perhaps I am still a greater heretic in my indifference to Camden's *Britannia*. The work was very meritorious in the author, as the first thing of the kind performed for us, and a vast undertaking for a single man—but really it is so lean a work, and of many counties we have now such ample descriptions, that except gratitude to Camden as the beginner, the work excites in me no other sensation, nor do I conceive why it is still so much admired, as I see no

Letter 2609.—Not in C.; now first printed (original in possession of Mr. Vernon Watney).

[1] Dryburgh Abbey; Lord Buchan bought the Dryburgh estate in 1786.

[2] *The History of Great Britain, from the Revolution in* 1688 *to the accession of George I*, translated from the Latin manuscript of Alexander Cunningham (1654–1737).

merit in it but that of industry. It is one of those books to which I would allow an honourable place in my library and none at all in my head.

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient
Humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2610. To MISS HANNAH MORE.

DEAR MADAM, Berkeley Square, Feb. 23, 1787.

I not only send you *La Cité des Dames*, but Christina's life of Charles the Fifth[1], which will entertain you more; and which, when I wrote my brief history of her, I did not know she had actually composed. Mr. Dutens told me of it very lately, and actually borrowed it for me; and but yesterday my French bookseller sent me three-and-twenty other volumes of those *Mémoires Historiques* which I had ordered him to get for me, and which will keep my eyes to the oar for some time, whenever I have leisure to sail through such an ocean; and yet I shall embark with pleasure, late as it is for me to undertake such a hugeous voyage: but a crew of old gossips are no improper company, and we shall sit in a warm cabin, and hear and tell old stories of past times.

Pray keep the volume as long as you please, and borrow as many more as you please, for each volume is a detached piece. Yet I do not suppose your friends will allow you much time for reading in town; and I hope I shall often

LETTER 2610. — [1] *Livre des faits et bonnes mœurs du Roi Charles V*, written in 1404 at the request of the King's younger brother, Philip, Duke of Burgundy.

be the better for their hindering you. Yours most sincerely and most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2611. TO THE REV. HENRY ZOUCH.

Berkeley Square, March 13, 1787.

IT is very true, Sir, as Lord Strafford told you, that I have taken care that letters of living persons to me shall be restored to the writers when I die. I have burnt a great many, and, as you desire it, would do so by yours; but, having received a like intimation some time ago, I put yours into a separate paper, with a particular direction that they should be delivered to you; and, therefore, I imagine it will be more satisfaction to you, as it will be to me too, that you should receive them yourself; and therefore, if you please to let me know how I shall convey them, I will bring them from Strawberry Hill, where they are, the first time I go thither. I hope you enjoy your health, and I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

END OF VOL. XIII

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Walpole, Horace
Letters

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